The World's Madonna

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The World's Madonna:

A History of The Blessed Virgin Mary

BY

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LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LTD.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROS.

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FRANCISCUS M. WYNDHAM,

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:

EDM. CANONICUS SURMONT,

Vicarius Generalis.

WESTMONASTERII, *die* 28 *Junii*, 1909.

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History of the Blessed Virgin.

CHAPTER I.

As a fitting introduction to this work, we may take the following extract from a lecture of Cardinal Wiseman, delivered in Dublin in 1865, in which that illustrious churchman and devoted servant of Mary gives us with his master hand an outline of the nature and scope of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. "It is not necessary," says the Cardinal, "for me to say anything to you who hear me in support of the Catholic doctrine concerning devotion to the Blessed Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is not necessary that I should even explain to you, as if you were an ignorant flock, the nature of this devotion, its character, its conditions: we will simply go through a few passages of her life, and consider her in her various relations with her Son, and see how we can trace those memorable events that distinguished her in the world, that have raised her to a place beside the throne of that Son in heaven, to her simple but glorious title of 'Mother of Jesus.' And first, my brethren, let us begin by contemplating her from the moment in which she verified the words of the angel, and gave to the world the Incarnate Word. It is certain

that if we look around on earth for a type and representation of the best and purest possible affection, if we look for love in its utmost intensity, in its most unselfish simplicity, in its sweetest tenderness, there at once arises to our minds that natural affection which binds the mother to her child. So remarkable is this affection that God has beautifully chosen it as the representation of His own love for man. He does not content Himself with saying to us 'I am your Father,' notwithstanding all the natural ties of affection the title suggests; but He compares Himself to a mother in His true love for us. He could not give us any image more complete to show the nature of His love for us than by comparing Himself not to a father, but to a mother. 'Can a mother forget the child of her womb? And even if she should forget it, yet will I not forget thee.' Still, my brethren, perfect as is this love, considered as the highest and holiest of earthly affections, there must be, and there is, a love superior to it—far greater, far higher—a love divine. No virtuous, no pious, no devout mother but knows this, that rather must she lose her child than lose her God. To only one being on earth—to only one of God's creatures has it ever been, or will ever be, granted that this love of a mother for her child could not be misplaced, could not be excessive, for, by virtue of the maternity of Mary, she was constituted the Mother of God. The angels, Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael, who were chosen to

carry out the glorious, the magnificent designs of God, are distinguished among the heavenly hosts, and have specific names recorded that we may single them out for devotion; and those great men of the old law, commencing with Moses and proceeding down to the Maccabees, who were ordained to be the chiefs of God's people, were honoured amongst the men of the old law, and were raised above the rank of ordinary prophets. But to take part in the work of God silently, unknown, without reward from mankind, at least during life, without those incentives which make men equal to a great and high mission in the world, that was a merit reserved for her, without whose co-operation it is hard to say in what state mankind would have been. God was pleased that it should depend on her that the greatest of mysteries should be accomplished. He gives her time to deliberate; He accords her permission to suggest difficulties, to make her own terms, that she shall not have to surrender the precious gift which she values higher than the highest imaginable honours; so that it requires the assurance that to God's omnipotence even the union of the two prerogatives is possible, and that attribute is to be exerted for her. And so it was not until she had said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to the Word,' that the great mystery was accomplished. And now pause for a moment. Here is the greatest of God's works, not since the creation of the world, but

during the countless ages of His own existence, the Word Incarnate, the Word made flesh. Yet how singular is the part of Mary in this mystery. She utters the words; they scarcely fall from her lips, and she alone remains entrusted, not only with the precious gift itself, but with the knowledge of it. No one else can have known it. Joseph himself was not aware of it till an angel revealed it to him.

"Allow me now for an instant to deviate from the line which I was pursuing. I have addressed you as good and faithful Catholics, believing what the Church teaches you, and also as servants of Mary, feeling true devotion to her, but I beg here to make a remark which may be useful in conversing with others. Look at those men who, unhappily for themselves, know not, and understand not the prerogatives of Mary; look, I will not say at those more wretched men who have the hardihood, the unfeelingness, the brutality, to destroy her, but to those who in more respectful terms, profess simply to overlook her. Just see the position in which such persons are placed as to their belief. They say, 'We cannot worship,' as they call it, 'the Virgin Mary; we cannot honour her, because in doing so we should be derogating from the honour due to her Son, to the Word Incarnate, to Jesus Christ.' I would say to those men: How do you know that He was incarnate? How do you know that the Son of God became man? You say in your creed that He was conceived of the

Holy Ghost. Who gave you the evidence of that conception? Gabriel did not manifest it. He vanished as soon as he had delivered his message. You do not believe, no Protestant believes, that the Bible is a simple revelation, that is, a series of truths not known, and which could not be known, by human means. The Evangelists themselves—the one from whom I have quoted—tells us that 'Mary laid up all these things in her heart,' and that he sought information from those who knew everything from the beginning. Mary was the only, the sole witness in the world to the mystery of the Incarnation. There was only her word that she conceived thus miraculously of the Holy Ghost. She told it to the Apostles, and they believed it, and recorded it with the sanction of the Holy Spirit. The real source of the historical and inspired testimony of the accomplishment of the great mystery of the Incarnation is Mary; and those who reject her could not have come to believe, except through her testimony, that God took upon Him our nature. It is through her that they know it; yet they pretend that honour to her is at His expense. But as it was with her co-operation that this great mystery was wrought, so was it right that through her it should be communicated.

"The time at length came for the awful completion of that eternal mystery of man's redemption, which was to astonish men and angels, on Calvary. My dear brethren, why was Mary there at the foot of the Cross? That

simple question in its answer solves a great problem. Why was Mary there? It was no part of the sentence on Jesus, as if to increase or to enhance the bitterness of His death, that His mother should stand by, and it never was commanded in any nation, however barbarous, that the mother should be at the scaffold when her son expiated what was, rightly or wrongly, imputed to him as his guilt. It was not compulsory on Mary to be at Calvary; she was not driven there, nor was it usual in her to seek publicity. She had lived the whole of her life in retirement, first in the Temple, then in the cottage at Nazareth. And she who naturally shrunk from the assemblies of men, came forth at the time most trying to her feelings, to be present at the execution, the brutal execution of her Son, in that form of suffering which was most revolting and most cruelly rending to her tender heart. Mary came forth to witness the death—of whom? Of her only beloved Son, of her only Child, whom she remembered once an Infant in her arms. She will draw nigh to see those Hands cruelly pierced which she had so often pressed to her lips; she will stand by and see that noble, that divine Countenance—the first look from whose eyes beamed upon her, the first smile of whose lips shone upon her heart—bedewed with blood streaming from the thorny crown, to see Him still bearing the marks of having been beaten and buffeted and defiled by spittle and mocked by His persecutors. She came to seek Him at the hour of

this suffering. And why? Because the heart of the mother must be near that of the Son, in order that they may be both struck together, and so endure most perfect union of suffering, that she may be said truly to co-operate, in sympathy, with the divine work of salvation. Suppose, my brethren, you have two masses of unalloyed gold. Let the one be heavier than the other, of incomparably greater value, more beautiful in its colour, more pure in its substance, and in every way more precious from a thousand associations. Let the other be also indeed of great price, though very inferior to it. What will you do that they may become only one? Cast them into the same crucible, heat them in the same furnace, and they will melt into one, so that you may not separate them again. What a furnace of affliction, what a crucible of torture and of anguish was that in which the two Hearts of Jesus and Mary were fused in that hour on Calvary, in both every other thought, every other idea, lost in the predominant one of accomplishing the great sacrifice which God had appointed for the salvation of man. This conformity went further still. In that most solemn hour Jesus formally recognised Mary as His mother, as He proclaimed God to be His Father. What could she aspire to but imitation, however imperfect, of what the heavenly Father was accomplishing in His well-beloved Son? Then, as she knew that the Eternal Father was surrendering Him to sacrifice and to death out of love for man,

could she do less than surrender Him too? And she is come hither for this very purpose. Therefore does she stand at the foot of the Cross, that for lost man she may make a public and willing sacrifice of all that is dear to her on earth. Only she, His mother, can thus put herself into strict uniformity with His Almighty Father. As she accepted Him at His Incarnation, she yielded Him at His death. Thus it is she became a co-operator, as far as possible, with God in His great work; she became the priestess on the part of mankind, to whom was allowed to accomplish the holocaust which was considered too difficult and painful for Father Abraham, the sacrifice of a beloved child.

"My brethren, I am sure that many of your hearts have been suggesting that this maternity of Mary extends beyond one dear Son; and you ask, are not we her children? Do we not commemorate on this feast of her maternity her kind, affectionate, and efficacious relationship with us of a mother to her children? I need not tell you that, when the two sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were so melted together in affection that they could not be separated, that was the hour in which the fully recognised brotherhood between Jesus and us was established. The relationship which commenced with the Incarnation caused us to become His brothers truly, and Mary consequently to become our mother; but His parched and quivering lips just before He uttered His

last cry upon the Cross proclaimed this relationship, and bade her receive from John his love as a child, and John to receive hers as of a mother. We accept these words in their fullest sense. We take our place willingly with the beloved disciple without fear of being rejected, and gladly send up our prayers to Mary for intercession, as our mother sitting on her throne in heaven. We cannot place her in the ranks of other saints who are partaking of bliss with Him. There are amongst them, no doubt, those to whom we owe special devotion, those who are the patrons of our country, those who planted and defended its faith, who were celebrated for having honoured it and, still more, blessed it. There are also there our guardian angels with the mighty host of blessed spirits that we know to be ministering before the throne of God. Yet, not with the honour that we pay, or the prayers which we address to any of this glorious array of saints and angels, can we classify the deeper devotion, the more fervent supplications, still less the filial duty which we owe the Mother of God. We speak to them as saints, as faithful servants of the Lord, as our friends who have preceded us to glory and can assist us there; but to none can we use the words which we can apply to Mary; to none can we speak as a child to its mother; with none other can we establish our claim to the patronage, care, and love which, as children of a common mother, every day and every night we are at liberty to demand from

Mary. Even as Solomon, when his mother was announced, rose and bowed to her, and placed her on his right hand on a throne before all others, so is Mary placed between the heavenly host and her Son, so that when we think of her we may lift our minds and thoughts to her as one enjoying heaven like a solitary, brilliant luminary shining between Him and the highest rank of those blessed hosts. And why? Because she is the Mother of God. Her maternity has bestowed upon her that which, after all, is the completion of her love. Her love is perfect, her conformity is rendered eternal, and her co-operation with Jesus continual in that constant flow of her kindness to us, in that perpetual representing of our wants to her Divine Son, in her faithful intercession for us all, consistently with her singular prerogative of the Mother of God. Then, beloved brethren, cease not in your affection for her. Mind not more than you do the winds that fly past you, words which you may hear in disparagement of this most beautiful devotion, as if the worship of our divine Lord suffered from devotion to her. Pray frequently in your necessities to her, in your wants, in your trials, personal or domestic, and feel sure that she will attend to your petitions. Be assured that the link which bound Him to her on earth, and continues to unite her to Him in heaven, also binds us to her, so that in Jesus and Mary we have our confidence, our hope, and in the end, eternal bliss."

This beautiful panegyric by Cardinal Wiseman, in which he clearly explains the nature and character of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin—a panegyric delivered in the nineteenth century—differs in nothing, as will now be seen, from the doctrine of the Church as laid down by St. Bernard early in the twelfth—nearly 800 years before, a circumstance which even Protestants can hardly overlook.

CHAPTER II.

St. Bernard begins with characteristic modesty: "Devotion," he says in his Preface, "bids me write, and my occupations hinder me. And yet, encumbered as I am by bodily ills, and therefore unable for the present to follow the common life of my brethren, I will not let the little leisure time, which I am allowed to steal away at least from my sleep, night by night, remain idle. Gladly, therefore, will I attempt, before all other things, that which my heart has long urged me to do, and that is, to say somewhat in praise of the Virgin Mother, on that lesson of the Gospel, in which, according to St. Luke, the history of our Lady's Annunciation is contained. Now, although I am not urged to do this by any want of my brethren, or for their advantage—whose progress in virtue, nevertheless, I must needs attend to—yet, as by doing this I am not rendered the less ready to administer to all their wants, I do not think they ought to take it ill, if in this matter I satisfy my own devotion"; and then he adds: "I have explained this Gospel lesson as well as I could, yet am I not ignorant that my explanation will not give pleasure to all, and that on account of it I shall be exposed to the indignation of many. By some it will be judged superfluous; by others

presumptuous, inasmuch as, that after the Fathers have treated this very passage, I should thrust myself forward as a new expounder of the same. But if I have said anything after the Fathers, yet not contrary to the Fathers, I do not consider that either to the Fathers, or to any one else, this should be displeasing. For where I have said what I have received from the Fathers, so that, while free from the pride of presumption, it may be accompanied by the fruit of devotion, I can afford to hear with patience of its being uncalled for. Yet they who taunt me with my idle and useless explanation may as well know that it has been my purpose not so much to explain the Gospel, as from the Gospel to take occasion of setting forth what it was a pleasure to say. If I have sinned in thus stirring up my own devotion, rather than seeking the common good, the loving Virgin will have power enough to make excuse for this my sin to her merciful Son, to whom, such as it is, I have with the greatest devotion dedicated this little work.

"The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary" (Luke i. 26, 27). What is the meaning of the Evangelist in thus expressly mentioning so many proper names in this passage? I believe it is because he would not have us hear with heedless ears what he has taken such earnest pains to relate. Thus he

names the messenger who is sent, the virgin to whom he is sent, and the spouse of the virgin. Thus, too, he points out the race of both, as well as their city and country, by their proper names. And why? Do you think that any one of these things has been set down to no purpose? Far from it. For if not a leaf of a tree, if not even one sparrow can fall to the ground without a cause, without our Heavenly Father, can I suppose that even one word more than is needed proceeds from the mouth of the Evangelist, above all when he is relating the sacred history of the Word? The Evangelist says, then: "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God." The very name being interpreted is the Strength of God, and the angel was sent direct by God Himself. He strengthened and comforted the timid virgin that she might not be affrighted at so new a miracle, saying: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God." To whom was the angel sent? "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph"—a virgin so worshipful as to be saluted by an angel; so humble as to be espoused to a carpenter. "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin," that is, from the Most High to the lowly, from the Lord to His handmaiden, from the Creator to the creature. The angel, then, according to the Evangelist, "was sent unto a virgin," a virgin in the flesh, a virgin in her soul, a virgin by profession, a virgin, in a word, as is described by the Apostle, "holy in body and in spirit," a virgin discovered not

newly, nor by chance, but chosen from before the beginning of the world, foreknown by the Most High, and prepared for Himself, watched over by angels, foretold by the Fathers, promised by the prophets. Even the holy Elizabeth could not bear her presence except with trembling, fear, and reverence. "Whence is this to me," she cried, "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

"The angel being come in to her said, Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" "Hail!" he says, "full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" What wonder that she was full of grace, since the Lord was with her! But this rather is wonderful, that He who had sent the angel to the virgin was found by the angel to be with the virgin. Was God swifter than His angel, so as to be beforehand with His messenger as he made speed to earth? "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" The Father, I say, is with thee who maketh His Son thine own. The Son is with thee, who, to hide in thee a marvellous mystery, in a wonderful way both unlocks for Himself the secret place of His birth, and saves for thee the mark of thy virginity. The Holy Ghost is with thee, who, with the Father and the Son, sanctifies thy womb. The Lord, therefore, is with thee."

The angel then says: "Blessed art thou among women!" "And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." Then the angel looks at the

virgin, and easily perceiving out of his manifold thought how to address her, comforts her in her fear, strengthens her as to her doubt, and calling her familiarly by her name, prevails upon her not to fear. "Fear not, Mary," he says, "thou hast found grace with God." In these words there is no craft, no deceit. There is in them no over-reaching, no snare that thou mayest suspect, O Mary! I am no man, but a spirit; the Angel of God, not of Satan. Fear not, then, Mary, thou hast found grace with God. Oh! if thou knowest how pleasing thy humility is to the Most High, how exceeding high a dignity awaits thee close to Himself, thou wouldst not deem thyself unworthy of an angel's salutation, or of an angel's worship.

Why shouldst thou say that the favour of the angels is beyond thy due, when thou hast found grace with God? What grace? The peace of God and men, the destruction of death, the renewal of life. This is the grace which thou hast found with God. And this shall be the sign to thee: "Behold! thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." Gather, then, O prudent virgin, from the name of thy promised Son, how great and special a grace thou hast found with God. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus." We learn the meaning of this name from another evangelist, who tells us the angel's interpretation of the same. "For He shall save His people from their sins." "He

shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High."

Whatever we allege in praise of the Mother beyond all doubt extends to the Son; and again, when we honour the Son, we do not turn our back on the Mother's glory. For if, according to Solomon, "A wise son maketh the father glad," if he is the glory of his father, how much more glorious is it to be made the mother of Wisdom itself? But why do I attempt to praise her, whom the prophets foretell, the angel proclaims, the evangelist relates to be full of glory? I therefore praise not, because I dare not; all I do is devoutly to unfold again what the Holy Ghost has already unfolded by the mouth of His evangelist.

"And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David, His father." These are the words of the angel to the Virgin concerning her promised Son, in which the additional promise is made, that He is to possess the Kingdom of David. "And Mary said unto the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answered and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore, also, the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Take heed, I pray, and observe with what reverence the angel says: "The Holy which shall be born of thee." Why does he thus simply say, "The Holy," without adding any other word? I believe it is because

he had no word by which he could properly express that which, all glorious, magnificent, and worshipful, was to be taken from the Virgin's most pure flesh, and to be united with His soul by the Only-begotten of the Father. If he had said the Holy Flesh, or the Holy Man, or the Holy Child, or any such thing, he would seem to himself to have said but little. Therefore he said undeterminately, "the Holy"; for whatever the Virgin bore was holy, both by sanctification of the Spirit, and by its being taken up into the Person of the Word. And the angel added: "And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age." What need was there to announce also that Elizabeth, although barren, had conceived? Was it, perchance, because Mary doubted or disbelieved his word, that he would confirm her belief by a quite recent miracle? God forbid! We read, indeed, that Zacharias' unbelief was punished by this very angel. But nowhere do we read that Mary was blamed in anything—nay, rather, we find that her faith was praised by Elizabeth, when she prophesied and said: "Blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." And the angel added: "Because no word shall be impossible with God." This, too, moves me in the angel's words, that he said in a marked way, not that no work or deed shall be impossible with God, but no word. With God alone, with whom it is the same thing to do as to speak,

to speak as to will, is it rightly said that no word is impossible.

Thou hast heard, O Virgin, the work of God; thou hast heard, also, the way in which it is to be accomplished; each of them marvellous, each of them gladsome and full of joy. "Rejoice," then, "greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem!" And since joy and gladness have been given to thine ears, let us, too, hear from thee the answer of joy that we are longing for, that the bones that have been broken may rejoice. Thou hast heard, I say, God's work, and thou hast believed; believe also in the way of which thou hast heard. Thou hast heard that thou shalt conceive and bear a Son; thou hast heard that thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost. The angel is waiting for thine answer; it is time that he return unto God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for the word of pity, even we who are overwhelmed in wretchedness by the sentence of damnation. Behold! to thee is the price of our salvation offered. If thou consent, straightway shall we be freed. In the eternal Word of God were we all made, and lo! we die; by one little word of thine in answer shall we all be made alive. This Adam asks of thee, O loving Virgin, poor Adam, exiled as he is from paradise, with all his poor, wretched children; this Abraham begs of thee, and David; this all the holy Fathers implore, even thy Fathers, who themselves are dwelling in the valley of the shadow of death; this the whole world is waiting for,

kneeling at thy feet. And rightly so, for on thy lips is hanging the consolation of the wretched, the redemption of the captive, the speedy deliverance of all who otherwise are lost; in a word, the salvation of all Adam's children, of all thy race.

Make answer, O Virgin, and answer speedily. O Lady, speak the word which earth and hell (the souls in Limbo) and heaven are waiting for. Answer, then, the angel, answer speedily; nay, through the angel, answer thy Lord. Mary answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word."

Most modest was Mary: we prove it from the Gospel. For where do we ever see her full of words, or taking too much upon her? She stood without when she was desirous of speaking with her Son (Matt. xii. 46). Neither did she by her authority as His mother, either interrupt His discourse, or enter hastily into the house in which He, her Son, was speaking.

In the whole text of the four Evangelists—if we remember right—Mary is heard speaking only four times. First of all to the angel, but only when once and again he had spoken to her; secondly, to Elizabeth, when the voice of her salutation had made John leap for joy in his mother's womb; and then, while Elizabeth was magnifying Mary, Mary's only thought was of magnifying her Lord; thirdly, to her Son, when He was twelve years old, to tell Him that, "His father and she had sought Him sorrow-

ing"; fourthly, at the marriage-feast, to her Son and to the servants. And the words she then spoke were a most sure sign of her inborn gentleness and maidenly modesty. For, regarding the shame of others as her own, she could not bear it, neither could she hide the failure of the wine. And when she was checked by her Son, meek and humble of heart as she was, she answered Him not a word. Yet not on this account did she lose heart or hope, but simply told the servants to do whatsoever He should tell them.

The martyrdom of the Virgin, which is reckoned among the stars of her diadem, is set forth, as well in Simeon's prophecy as in the story itself of our Lord's Passion. "This Child," said the holy old man, "is set for a sign which shall be contradicted." But to Mary he said: "And thine own soul a sword shall pierce." Of a truth, O blessed Mother, did a sword pierce thy soul, so that not without cause do we call thee more than a martyr, since the compassion of the soul was greater than the passion of the body.

"And yet," continues St. Bernard, "all foolishness is placed beneath the feet of this sorrowful mother, and he who is the one fool and prince of all folly, who changed, indeed, as the moon, lost his wisdom in his own beauty, is crushed and trodden beneath Mary's feet and suffers woeful bondage. For she is that woman promised of old by God, who was to crush the old serpent's head by her foot of

power. For she alone has crushed all heresy. One may have proudly taught that Christ sprang not from the substance of her flesh; another may have hissed out the false doctrine that she had not borne her Child, but suborned Him. Another may have blasphemed; another, unable to bear her title of God's Mother, may have flouted her mighty title of Theotokos. What matters it? The crafty have been crushed; they who would have tripped up her heel have been trodden beneath her foot; they who would have taken away from her high dignity have been confuted, and all generations call her blessed!"

St. Bernard then warns sinners and reminds them of the dread and fear which consumed the soul of Adam. "Thou wert afraid (O man) to approach unto the Father; affrighted at the mere hearing of His voice, thou didst fly beneath the trees. He gave thee Jesus as thy mediator. But peradventure thou fearest in Him, too, the Majesty of God, because although He was made Man, yet He remained God. Wouldst thou have a mediator to Him also? Run back to Mary. Not that God is powerless without this channel to pour in grace, as good it seems to Him, but that for you He would provide this channel. Your hands, it may be, are full of blood, or stained with bribes. Have a care, then, if you would not suffer a repulse, that the little you desire to offer, be offered through Mary's hands; those hands that are ever welcome, and most worthy of all accept-

ance. Lilies they are and of the whitest; and He who is the lover of lilies will not blame, as not being among the lilies, whatever it may be that He finds in the hands of Mary."

CHAPTER III.

THE very ignorant criticism that the apparently disrespectful use of the word "Woman" had its counterpart in the original Greek "γυναι," is now exploded. It is now conceded, both by Greek authors and in the spoken language, whether of Greece itself or of the Greek cities of the Levant, that the word γυνη was used in a sense at once respectful and tender—used even in addressing queens. As long, however, as the word could be wrested, together with the context, to imply disrespect to our Lady, it was unhappily so used. This was only given up when the practice recoiled on those who used it, and showed that whatever else they knew, they were certainly ignorant of Greek. They still clung to the context, however, and with as little reason, for the facts are altogether overlooked. In the first place, as has been pointed out by the translator of St. Bernard, the words were spoken privately to our Lady, and it is evident that our Lord, having intimated to her that His time for working miracles had not yet come, the Blessed Virgin must have realised from something in His look or the tone of His voice that He would do what she asked, for she immediately said to the waiters, "Whatsoever He shall say unto you, do ye." The attempt to explain

words offhand, and without the slightest reference to the circumstances of the case, is ever misleading. We find again and again in the Scriptures a hidden meaning in the words of our Lord. For example, He said "Lazarus sleepeth" when He knew he was dead. Again, when Peter implored Him not to go up to Jerusalem, where it was quite certain they would take His life, although it was manifest that it was out of His intense love for our Lord that Peter spoke, yet our Lord answered him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan"—the meaning plainly being that Peter did not realise the consequences of what he urged. So also to the women on the way to Calvary, who were deeply affected, and sympathised intensely with Him, He said: "Weep not for Me, daughters of Jerusalem, weep for yourselves." Contrast our Lord's action at Cana with that of His meeting Herod after leaving Pilate. When Herod, who expected and hoped to see a miracle, urged Him to work one, our Lord did not pay the slightest attention, and made him no answer, although, humanly speaking, His life was in Herod's hands.

Protestant commentators on the miracle at Cana ignore the miracle and fasten on the fancied rebuke; would they have done this had they been the givers of the feast and their wine had failed? We may be quite certain that those who were present at the miracle were wanting in neither gratitude nor reverence, and gladly acknowledged that it was at our

Lady's request that the miracle was wrought.

It is forgotten, too, in contemplating the life of the Blessed Virgin, what, according to the prophecy of Simeon, that life was to be—that her heart was to be pierced with a sword of grief. Can we suppose that this was ever absent from her mind? Read in this light, what were words to her—even though construed as a rebuke? She knew both that our Lord could and that He would perform the miracle when she asked it; beyond this she did not allow it to give her concern, and simply told the servants to do as He commanded. She alone of those present, although Peter and Andrew and Philip were all at the feast, she alone of those in the world realised the tremendous Presence in which she stood—the awful Presence of the Deity. Men forget this presence of God, Catholics and Protestants alike; she never did. Compare, too, that other incident recorded in the Gospel, one of the four times when she spoke, the losing of the Child Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem, and the finding of Him in the Temple. The language chosen by her and St. Joseph was deprecatory in the extreme in addressing Him, Child as He was: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Those who want to search out for something concealed, and to penetrate the counsels of the Most High, may construe the answer then given as a rebuke, they have not ventured to do so; the Scriptures add, "They returned to Nazareth and He was subject unto

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them." The truth is, we are continually bringing our shallow tests and our still shallower intelligence to bear on the high things—on the mysteries of God, and naturally without result. Contrast the attitude of man to his Creator with that of the heavenly spirits—"laudant angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates," the dominations adore, the powers tremble. The attitude of man alone is incomprehensible alike in its blindness and its folly. Johnson, true Christian that he was, accepted the doctrine of the Trinity because his powerful intellect taught him that faith was one thing, comprehension another; whilst Whately, Christian Archbishop though he was, rejected it—called it illogical, and thought he had disposed of it by his logical formula. Johnson simply states what has been revealed to us about it, which leaves it still a mystery. Whately, a Christian Archbishop, and bound by his office to teach the truths of revelation, is worse than illogical; he remained an Archbishop of a Christian Church whilst rejecting a fundamental doctrine of Christianity.

As marking the chronology of the marriage feast of Cana, it is of interest to note that the meeting between our Saviour and St. John the Baptist had just taken place near the Jordan, on which memorable occasion, when the Baptist saw our Saviour coming towards the Jordan, he exclaimed aloud in the presence of the multitude, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."

We know that after the Ascension the

Blessed Virgin continued "in prayer and supplication with the Apostles," expecting the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. After Pentecost, living—as it may be assumed that she did—in the house of St. John, she would be, in a manner, in the very heart of the mighty movement then beginning in Jerusalem for the evangelisation of the world—that movement in which her Divine Son had promised to be with His Apostles and His Church "all days even unto the consummation of the world." She would be a daily witness of the progress of that Church, and of the signs and wonders, then of continual occurrence, which accompanied it. She would hear from St. John of the imprisonment of St. Peter, of his chains falling off, and of his miraculous deliverance by the angel; St. John would tell her too of St. Stephen's magnificent message to the scribes and the doctors of law—that message which they refused to receive; would describe his martyrdom, so glorious that even the scoffing Jews who stoned him to death had to admit that his face shone like that of an angel. She would hear, too, of his clothes being laid at the feet of a young Pharisee called Saul, who had been one of the most furious of his persecutors. Then, later, would come the accounts of fresh wonders, of her Divine Son appearing to this very Saul on his way to Damascus, and of the Divine summons conveyed to him in the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"—then of Saul's miraculous blindness, and his subsequent restora-

tion to sight. Later, she would learn that the burning zeal which had characterised him as a Pharisee was now directed to the service of Him who had given him miraculous warning. How the Blessed Virgin must have "pondered all these things in her heart."

We can understand, however, that after Pentecost her habit and manner of life would be but little changed, or if any change were visible, it would be, no doubt, that her silence and absorption in God would be more marked, more continual, that she would be constantly in the Temple—that Temple always her home, but now charged with such memories and pictures of the past. There would that past come back to her. There would that wondrous scene of the Child Jesus disputing with the doctors again rise before her vision; there would come back her rapture of finding Him—His very looks and the tones of His voice, and the ecstasy with which she listened to Him, Child as He was, confuting the elders, she alone understanding it all, and the mystery of it. Again and again would the vision come back to her—clearer and ever clearer; the Child face—that face of heaven—the Man-God—her Child. Once more would she hear His voice, once more would those wondrous words sound in her ears, by which He gave the first sign that He was indeed the Messiah, and was "about His Father's business." After the finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the Scriptures merely tell us that He returned to

Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and was subject to them. Yet there can be little doubt that from that hour there was a marked and important change. The Child Jesus had distinctly announced that He must be about His Father's business—had therefore plainly declared to them at once His Godhead, and that it must be borne in mind, "He must be about His Father's business." From that time forward how Joseph and Mary must have gazed into those unfathomable eyes—must have pondered on the wonderful life passing before them—on the mysterious words which fell from His lips. How the Blessed Virgin must have realised the might and the mystery of that Motherhood which had been conferred upon her; how both she and St. Joseph must have felt that they were in a tremendous Presence—the Presence of the Living God. Their awe in that Presence must have been deepened by the wonderful incident of the Temple, and even in the case of the Blessed Virgin can never for a moment have been absent from her mind, until at her glorious assumption she was admitted to the Beatific Vision, and heard amidst the acclaim of all heaven, her triumphant "Euge," "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"—into the joy of Him who was to her above all others, her Lord, her Divine Son.

We know, of course, that the hidden and beautiful life of the Blessed Virgin was but the expression of her supernatural life, but the wish rises unbidden to the heart, "Oh, could we

have known more of it." It is recorded of St. Augustine that he said: "Oh, what would I not give to have known St. Paul!" and it is said that even Tennyson was so attracted by the beautiful life and character of St. Francis of Assisi, that he gave expression to a similar desire. In this spirit, what would not a Catholic give, if in addition to the brief Gospel narrative, St. Polycarp for example—the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, the friend and companion to whom St. John must have been constantly speaking of the Blessed Virgin—had only told us a little of what he said. St. Polycarp, Bishop of the Church of Smyrna, governed that see for seventy years, and was said to be a hundred and twenty years old at the time of his martyrdom. He was, therefore, for a great part of his life, quite close to Ephesus, where both the Blessed Virgin and St. John died. St. John must often have spoken to him of her —of the face of the Mater Dolorosa, of its mournful beauty, of its likeness to the face of Him whom the Psalmist calls beautiful beyond the sons of men. St. Polycarp, too, from St. John's report could have helped us to realise something of the music of that voice so seldom heard, as mayhap St. John heard her repeat from the "Magnificat" that inspired summary of her life contained in the words, "For He that is mighty hath done great things in me and Holy is His Name." Or, again, might he have heard the words which were at once a prophecy and a command: "And behold from henceforth

all generations shall call me blessed"—words which at once confound and rebuke those who, in spite of the Scriptures, withhold that title of "Blessed," which all generations with glad and loving obedience have given her. There must have been a look of celestial beauty in the face of the Virgin—there must too have been in it a great resemblance to the face of our Lord, to that face of which the "Transfiguration" gives us Raphael's conception in that last and greatest oil picture of the immortal master which has been thus eloquently described: "In the Head of the Saviour, on which he lavished all his power of majesty and beauty, we see at once the last perfection of art and the last work of Raphael." In the celebrated "Cenacolo," too, or "Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci, the artist saw he must leave the Head of the Saviour imperfect, because he could not realise his conception of the celestial beauty it ought to possess: "Ancor gli mancava due teste da fare, quella di Cristo della quale non voleva cercare in terra, e non poteva tanto pensare, che nella imaginazione gli paresse poter concepire quella belezza e celeste grazia, che dovette essere in quella della divinità incarnata." Da Vinci's idea, "della quale non voleva cercare in terra," is very beautiful, and he did realise his conception of the face of celestial beauty. "In St. Peter's, Rome, is the Pietà by Michel Angelo, a marble group representing the Virgin with the Body of the dead Saviour on her knees. The critics of Michel Angelo's own time objected to

the youthful appearance of the Virgin, and to the Son being represented older than the mother; but he justified it on the ground that it afforded an additional proof of the pure and spotless character of the Virgin. Michel Angelo has inscribed his name on the girdle of the Virgin; it is said to be the only work on which he ever did so."

As we have seen, the Blessed Virgin died at Ephesus, and the tradition is, that not only St. John but the other Apostles as well were present when she died there about A.D. 46, twelve years after the death of her Divine Son. We can understand, too, that St. Ignatius, at the time of the death of the Blessed Virgin—then a youth of about fifteen or sixteen years of age, but afterwards Bishop of Antioch, and disciple and friend of St. John the Evangelist, one of the first of the glorious martyrs of the Colosseum—must have heard much from St. John of the Blessed Virgin, and of her death surrounded by the Apostles. A strange interest attaches to him in every way, as the tradition known all over the East, and handed down from the Apostolic times, is that he was the child blessed and presented to the disciples by the Redeemer as a model of humility when He said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." We have in the Acts of St. Ignatius the following detailed and trustworthy account of his martyrdom, copied from Mr. Heman's admirable account of the Flavian Amphitheatre in his "Historic and

Monumental Rome" : "Whilst the Emperor Trajan was at Antioch, Ignatius was cited to appear before him, because accused of opposition to the established religion, and was condemned to suffer death at Rome—an order probably motived by the fear that his public execution in the city where he had won reverence and love in his apostolic office, might kindle public feeling, or excite tumult. The holy bishop, after receiving his sentence with cheerfulness, set out for his long journey on foot, guarded by the soldiers like a common criminal. At Smyrna he had an interview with St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John ; and thence did he address his affecting extant letters to the Christians at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles in Lydia, and at Rome, desiring the latter to make no attempt for saving his life. Having reached this metropolis in December, A.D. 109, he was destined to suffer at the recurrence of the next great festival, celebrated with public shows in the Amphitheatre—namely, on the 1st of February, 110. On that day he was exposed to lions on the arena ; and soon after those animals had been let loose against him, as he knelt calmly amid the gazing multitude, Ignatius ceased to live, his body being devoured, all except the larger bones, which were reverently collected and carried back to Antioch, probably by some Syrian Christians, who had followed him from thence. This martyr's remains were brought back from Antioch to Rome, A.D. 637, after the whole Syrian region had been subjected

by Moslem conquest, and those bones now lie under the high altar of St. Clemente, not far from the spot where he suffered."

The tradition of the Apostles being present in Ephesus at the death of the Blessed Virgin, coming as it did from Ephesus and Smyrna through Corinth and on to Venice, found, as we shall see, full expression amongst the Italian painters, and especially amongst those of the great school of Bologna. The Italian cities, notably Milan and Ravenna, were, from the foundation of Constantinople in the fourth century, almost in as close touch with that great seat of Empire as were the Greek cities of the Levant. This was especially true of Ravenna, and, three centuries later, of Venice, the Exarchate of the former having been for centuries ruled from Constantinople. It is not remarkable, therefore, that the early Italian painters should represent the death of the Blessed Virgin as they did and the presence at it of the Apostles. In the church of Corpus Domini, Bologna, in the fourth chapel, two of the frescoes by Ludovico Carracci (one of the great founders of the school of Bologna), represent, one fresco the Saviour appearing to the Virgin with the Patriarchs, and the other, the Apostles engaged in the burial of the Virgin. Then in the church of St. Maria della Vita, Bologna, we find the masterpiece of Alfonso Lombardo, a bas-relief representing the death of the Virgin in presence of the Apostles, whose heads are said to have inspired many painters of the Bolognese school.

In Rome we have similar evidence. In Raphael's "Coronation of the Virgin" in the Vatican, the Virgin and the Saviour are throned in the heavens, surrounded by angels bearing musical instruments, and cherubs above. Below are the Apostles standing round the empty tomb. In the Vatican, too, is the Madonna de Monte Luce, the composition only by Raphael, but finished by Guilio Romano and Penni. The upper part, by Romano, represents Christ crowning the Virgin in the heavens, the lower, by Penni, representing the Apostles assembled round the tomb of the Virgin. But as one might expect, it is on the Assumption that the greatest of the Italian painters have exhausted the wonders of their magic art—of their rapt and sublime devotion. Of Titian's Assumption in Venice, Phillips, R.A., says: "In this picture Titian has employed the whole power of his palette, from its brightest and purest light to its richest and deepest tone. The composition divides itself into three compartments of unequal size; the largest in the centre, where is the subject of it, the Assumption of the Virgin. Her action is grand and devout, her character maternal, the arrangement of her drapery such as to produce a full and fine form. It is a glorious work, its power of colour is immense, far beyond that even of any other picture of Titian."

In, as it is justly called, Guido's "Glorious Assumption," in the church of St. Ambrose, Genoa, we have his magnificent vision of the

Virgin surrounded by hosts of angels. In Correggio's Assumption in the Duomo of Parma, the Saviour is represented as giving her a crown of stars. Of this painting, Woods has given us so perfect a description that he enables us actually to see it with him. He says: "The subject of this magnificent fresco is the Assumption. The painter has imagined that the octagon, or drum, from which the cupola rises, embraces the space on earth in which stood the sepulchre of the Virgin; for this purpose, upon the octagon itself, from which the great vault springs, runs a balustrade, above which rises a candelabrum at each of the eight angles, with a number of boys between engaged in lighting tapers, or burning incense or odoriferous herbs. On the balustrade and in front of the base of the cupola stand the Apostles, disposed around, looking upwards with astonishment and as if dazzled by the great light of the celestial host who transport the Virgin; and above, heaven appears open to receive her. The angel Gabriel descends to meet her, and the different hierarchies of the blessed circle around him. St. John is holding a lamb, angels around darting, as it were, through the clouds, and St. Thomas, also surrounded by angels, some bearing exotic fruits emblematical of this Apostle's labours in India." No wonder that Woods salutes this great masterpiece at once of Correggio's inspiration and of his homage to the Blessed Virgin as "magnificent." We thus see how the greatest of the Italian painters have

given us their sublime conceptions of the Assumption—conceptions so realistic, and which so raise our thoughts to the vision of the unseen —to the heavens and the virtues of the heavens and their glorious Queen, that as the centuries rolled on the artists of the world and the Christians of the world have come to gaze upon them. How this subject of the Assumption inspired the saints as well as the painters, a wonderful incident in the life of St. Stanislaus Kostka shows. When that young and beautiful life was coming to a close, the thought of the Assumption had so entered into it, had been so vividly and constantly present to him, that at last he prayed that he might be permitted to die on the feast of her whom he had so loved that his face had always flushed when he spoke of her ; and he predicted that he would die upon that day. The extraordinary thing was that his prayer was heard, and on the great feast of the Assumption he passed to his reward.

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH we know so little of the actual life of the Blessed Virgin, we can and do know much of the places which were hallowed by her presence—of Bethlehem, where her Divine Son, our Saviour, was born ; of Nazareth, where the Holy Family lived ; of Jerusalem, where her heart was pierced with the sword of grief, as she stood by the Cross on which her Divine Son poured out the last drop of His blood to redeem us ; of Ephesus, where she who had been declared by the angel "blessed amongst women" was summoned to her true home amongst the blessed, to her high place among the angels waiting for their Queen—the angels with whom even on earth she had been in communion.

Of Jerusalem, as we know it, it is safe to say that it has little in common with the magnificent city destroyed by Titus, except the site and the natural features of the country ; but with Bethlehem it is different. It is not improbable that the city of some five thousand inhabitants now visited by travellers and pilgrims is not unlike the Bethlehem of the Nativity, and that owing to the cast-iron habits of the East, there is little change either in the appearance of the inhabitants or their buildings. We shall find from the account of a recent traveller, an

accomplished foreigner, that this is so. He writes :—

"We started, some in carriages and some on horseback, on our short journey to Bethlehem. The bad, stony road winds between old walls, olive-gardens, and half-ruined houses, always downhill, towards the steep hill-side on which this famous town, the birthplace of our Saviour, is built. The name Bêt-lahem is very ancient, and signifies in the Hebrew 'the place of bread.' In Bible story this place was known both for the fertility of the country round, and as the home of the House of David. The name of Ephrata, which also refers to the fruitfulness of the district, often occurs in the songs and warnings of the prophets: 'And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'

"The town is built picturesquely on the ridge of a hill, along which it extends for some distance. Between the stony slopes, level gardens of olives and vines are planted, which give the place an air of sheltered verdure. The houses, built of white stone with flat roofs, the cupolas and towers of the churches, the terraces and the convents, all give to this hallowed spot the look of a much larger town than it really is. After passing the first houses we turned into a narrow street; uneven pavement, rough woodwork, gloomy walls, and an incessant up and

down hill are the first impressions a traveller gets. There is scope, however, for interesting ethnographic study, for Bethlehem is far more than Jerusalem the type of an old Hebrew town. The people whom one sees on the flat roofs of their houses, in the streets, and at the windows, are old Scriptural Jews, just as imagination has pictured them. They wear big turbans, flowing robes, and bright vests; the rich are arrayed in the garb of the Pharisees, and the poor like those who heard in the streets and squares the life-giving words and precepts from the lips of the Redeemer.

The faces are thoroughly Hebrew, the long bent nose, the pale complexion, the black or red beards curled and ending in two points, are such as we see in the pictures of Christ and His Apostles. The women are most striking, wrapped in broad, full, coloured clothes, with a white cloth picturesquely draped round the head, of pale complexion, and with the most beautiful eyes, features, and hair that can be imagined. I have never seen such beautiful women as in Bethlehem, and nowhere else so many of them in one town. One beauty follows another. The noblest Madonna ideals, and the grandest women of whom we read in the New Testament walk about here in flesh and blood. The astonished traveller fancies himself transported in a dream to the days of the Saviour, when Mary brought forth the God-Man in a poor stable, and when the wise men of the East following the star came from the valley of the

Jordan, where their free Nomad kingdoms existed then as they exist now. Bethlehem and its holy places are exactly reproduced in the cradle scenes which we see in the pictures of pious painters of the middle ages, and the painted toys which are now given to children at Christmas. The town is chiefly inhabited by Christians, and of 5,000 souls only 300 are Moslems.

We came out of the street into a square surrounded by oriental houses, on one side of which stands the great Church of the Virgin, with the buildings pertaining to it. The most sacred places are under one roof, and belong to the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians in common. All three have their respective convents, communicating with the church. The Custode of Terra Santa awaited us at the gate, with some of his Franciscans, and the square was crowded with people. The church is very ancient and handsome, of Byzantine origin, and fairly preserved from the time of the Emperor Constantine, who built it. Inside one is surprised at the nooks which have been added in the course of time, and the many too narrow doors, through which one can scarcely squeeze; their purpose is to protect the holy places from invasion by the Arab tribes, whose abodes are not very remote, and who are quite lawless. The church, with its chapels and halls, bears the character of the earliest Christian—that is, Byzantine-times. Unhappily, many of the most ancient mosaics and paintings are effaced or

have fallen off, and the statues are broken. The church, too, is not well kept as a whole. One sees at every turn in its interior the results of the compromise between the three rites. Altars, fonts, and shrines of the different religions stand close beside each other. Franciscans and Greek priests walk about in numbers. Few pilgrims, and they chiefly Russian peasants, were there on this occasion; but all the more important inhabitants, as the town is Christian, followed us in our rounds. The most interesting parts are the subterranean grottoes. We reached the brightly-lighted Chapel of the Nativity by a flight of steps and through doors from the church. In a niche to the east is an altar; beneath it a silver star is let into the ground, and round it are the words, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus Natus est."

The narrow, gloomy chamber makes a great impression on the pilgrim, and ancient mysticism, the weight of tradition, and the conviction that here Christianity was born, and that from hence went forth that religion which has changed the face of the world, stirs solemn and sublime emotions. Unbidden he falls on his knees and kisses the stone which thousands of lips have pressed in the lapse of ages, breathing vows of fidelity with pious fervour.

Three steps lower down is the Chapel of the Cradle, where, according to tradition, the cradle of the child Jesus stood, and opposite to it the spot is shown where the three wise men of the East sank upon their knees, paying homage

to the Divine Child. In an underground passage we came to a hole in the naked rock, from which a spring burst forth for the use of the Holy Family ; a door led into another passage, where we were shown the spot at which Joseph received the command to flee into Egypt ; and yet further down is the cave-like Chapel of the Innocents, where Herod had the babes massacred who had been hidden by their mothers. Our way next took us to the altar and grave of St. Eusebius of Cremona, a pupil of St. Jerome. The grave of St. Jerome is close at hand, and we were shown, further on, the chapel hewn in the rock in which the saint lived, and where he wrote.

It is worthy of remark that the town of the Nativity alone, in Palestine, is almost free from the Turkish plague. The Moslems in Bethlehem had rebelled, and by orders from Constantinople were all but exterminated. Here, as it shows the difficult and dangerous nature of the hill-country "in the mountains of Judea," through which the Blessed Virgin went to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth, and the perils she must have encountered, we extract the following description of it : " Again a hill rises in front, belonging to the so-called mountains of Judea. It has strayed away from the direction in which the rest are seen, and advances into the plateau with its steep outlines and its peculiar form and colour.

" The whole of this pointed cone is a conglomerate of yellow clay, red rock, and brown

and grey stones, and is quite without plants. We had to pass between a deep ravine between it and the other border mountains. It was a 'mauvais pas'—nothing but smooth stones and precipices below. Our Bedouins themselves dismounted, and at one place the horses could not even be led. The clever animals followed their masters of their own accord. It is at such times that one learns to value the great intelligence of the Arab horse. A packhorse fell to a great depth at one of the bad places, but luckily came upon his back with the pack underneath him, and, wonderful to tell, escaped with a few bruises."

The Scriptures simply tell us that the Blessed Virgin went with haste into the mountains of Judæa to visit her cousin, but, of course, as to what she endured on that journey the brief Scripture narrative is silent; we can see, however, from the nature of the country what a fearful journey it must have been. As the travellers approached Mount Carmel a little later on, an incident occurred which showed that in that Holy Land where Christianity arose, this very devotion to the Mother of God is to-day, as it has ever been, part of the undying heritage of the Church and of the people.

Near Mount Carmel, the writer tells us, they heard the sweet pealing of the Convent bell: "Perfect stillness," he says, "reigned around, only the clear bell of the little Convent on Mar-Elias wafted the *Ave Maria* to the lonely spot."

Jerusalem has been described as of all earth's cities the fairest, which men came from the ends of the earth to see. Its glory was the Temple, which in the hearts of the believers was "the place where God's honour dwelt." Of that Temple Dean Farrar says, "The glowing descriptions of the Talmud respecting its colossal size and royal splendour are but the echoes of the intense love which breathes through the Psalms," and yet no description of its splendour can compare in absorbing interest with the picture given by Josephus of the lurid and awful scene of its destruction.

We know that after the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul, at whose feet his clothes had been laid, left for Damascus, and did not return to Jerusalem for three years after his conversion, that is, till about A.D. 38. It is highly probable that at this time he saw the Blessed Virgin; later he would not have had the opportunity, as she went with St. John to Ephesus, where she died about A.D. 46. St. Paul did not go on his missionary journey to Ephesus till 55 A.D., that is, nine years after her death. The journey, if overland, would have been a severe one for the Blessed Virgin, that is, from Jerusalem to Antioch, and thence through Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus, or through Celicia and Lycaonia. They may have gone only a portion of the way by land, via Berytuni, the modern Beyrout, and thence a few days' sail would bring them to Ephesus.

No more vivid picture of that magnificent

city has ever been drawn than that by Dean Farrar, who thus eloquently describes it:—

"Ephesus was the third capital and starting point of Christianity. At Jerusalem, Christianity was born in the cradle of Judaism; Antioch had been the starting-point of the Church of the Gentiles; Ephesus was to witness its full development, and the final amalgamation of its unconsolidated elements in the work of John, the Apostle of Love. It lay one mile from the Icarian Sea, in the fair Asian meadow, where myriads of swans and other waterfowl disported themselves amid the windings of Cayster, now the little Maeander. Its buildings were clustered under the protecting shadows of Coressus and Prion, and in the delightful neighbourhood of the Ortygian groves. Its haven, which had been once one of the most sheltered and commodious in the Mediterranean, had been partly silted up by a mistake in engineering, but was still thronged with vessels from every part of the civilised world. It lay at the meeting-point of great roads, which lead northwards to Sardis and Troas, southwards to Magnesia and Antioch, and thus commanded easy access to the great river valleys of the Hermus and Maeander, and the whole interior continent. Its seas and rivers were rich with fish; its air was salubrious; its position unrivalled; its population multifarious and immense. Its markets, glittering with the produce of the world's art, were the Vanity Fair of Asia. They furnished to the Exile of

Patmos the local colouring of those pages of the Apocalypse in which he speaks of 'the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyme wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon and odours, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.' And Ephesus was no less famous than it was vast and wealthy. Perhaps no region of the world has been the scene of so many memorable events in ancient history as the shores of Asia Minor. The whole coast was in all respects the home of the best Hellenic culture, and Herodotus declares that it was the finest site for cities of his day. It was from Lesbos, and Smyrna, and Ephesus, and Halicarnassus that lyric poetry, and epic poetry, and philosophy, and history took their rise, nor was any name more splendidly emblazoned in the annals of human culture than that of the great capital of Ionia.

"The temple, which was the chief glory of the city, and one of the wonders of the world, stood in full view of the crowded haven. Ephesus was the most magnificent of what Ovid calls 'the magnificent cities of Asia,' and the temple was its most splendid ornament. The ancient temple had been burnt down by Herostratus—an Ephesian fanatic who wished his name to be

recorded in history—on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great. It had been rebuilt with ungrudging magnificence out of contributions furnished by all Asia—the very women contributing to it their jewels, as the Jewish women had done of old for the tabernacle of the wilderness. To avoid the danger of earthquakes, its foundations were built at vast cost on artificial foundations of skin and charcoal laid over the marsh. It gleamed far off with a star-like radiance. Its peristyle consisted of one hundred and twenty pillars, of the Ionic order, hewn out of Parian marble. Its doors of carved cypress-wood were surrounded by transoms so vast and solid that the aid of miracles was invoked to account for their elevation. The staircase which led to the roof was said to have been cut out of a single vine of Cyprus. Some of the pillars were carved with designs of exquisite beauty. Within were the masterpieces of Praxiteles and Phidias and Scopas and Polycletes. Paintings by the greatest of Greek artists, of which one—the likeness of Alexander the Great, by Apelles, had been bought for a sum said to be equal in value to £5,000 of modern money, adorned the inner walls. The roof of the temple itself was of cedar-wood, supported by columns of jasper on bases of Parian marble."

In this magnificent city, Farrar says St. Paul saw that (in his own words) "a great door and effectual was open to him," though there were "many adversaries," and he alludes to the sig-

nificant incident of the man who was possessed, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles as follows: "When the seven sons of the Jewish priest, Sceva, who wandered about from place to place professing to eject demons, learned the reputation of Paul, and hearing, doubtless of the cures effected by the application of his handkerchiefs, they thought that by combining his name with that of Jesus they could effect cures in the most virulent cases which defeated even the ring and root of Solomon. They visited a man who was evidently a raving maniac, and, addressing the evil demon, they exclaimed: 'We exorcise you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.' In this instance, however, the adjuration proved to be a humiliating failure. The maniac astutely replied, 'Jesus I recognise and Paul I know, but who are you?' And then, leaping upon them with the superhuman strength of madness, he tore their clothes off their backs, and inflicted upon them such violent injuries that they were glad to escape out of the house, stripped and wounded. So remarkable a story could not remain unknown. It spread like wildfire among the gossiping Ephesians, and produced a remarkable feeling of dread and astonishment. One result of it was most beneficial. The stir produced by the discomfiture of the Benî Sceva revealed the startling fact that some of the brethren in embracing Christianity had not abandoned magic. Stricken in conscience, these secret dealers in the superstitious trumpery of 'curious arts' now came forward in the midst

of the community and confessed their secret malpractices. Even the deceivers came forward and gave the most decided proof of their sincerity by rendering impossible any future chicanery. They brought the cabalistic and expensive books, which had been the instruments of their trade, and publicly burned them. So extensive had been this secret evil-doing that the value of the books destroyed by the culprits in their penitence was no less than fifty thousand drachmas of silver, or, in our reckoning, about £2,030. This bonfire, which must have lasted for some time, was so striking a protest against the prevalent credulity that it was doubtless one of the circumstances which gave to St. Paul's preaching so wide a celebrity throughout all Asia.

"This little handful of incidents is all that St. Luke was enabled to preserve for us of this great Ephesian visit, which Paul himself tells us occupied a period of three years. Had we nothing else to go by, we might suppose that until the final outbreak, it was a period of almost unbroken success and prosperity. Such, however, as we find from the Epistles, and from the Apostle's speech to the Ephesian elders, was very far from being the case. It was a ministry of many tears, and though greatly blessed, it probably surpassed in suffering and in sorrow any other period of St. Paul's life." Eventually he had to fly for his life owing to the riots got up by the metal-workers and silversmiths, whose fury he had aroused by interfering with their trade when he denounced the sale of the images of Diana and

the idols which were their main traffic. He remained in Ephesus in all not quite three years, from the autumn of 55 A.D. to the spring of 58, and he never returned. St. Paul had been welcomed on his arrival by his old friends Aquila and Priscilla, who some time before had left Corinth to settle there.

The above somewhat lengthened extract from Dean Farrar has been given because it gives such full details of the Ephesus of St. John and the Blessed Virgin; though practically in the first half of the century and for some years later, even allowing for the mission of St. Paul, it was evident that Christianity had not made much progress. It was in the last half of the century and of St. John's life and episcopate that the tremendous advance was made which earned for Ephesus its title of the third capital of Christianity, and which made a writer so weighty as Martineau call not St. Paul, but St. John "the Ephesian Apostle."

The spirit of the Blessed Virgin and of St. John must have breathed over and have rested on those chosen Churches mentioned in the Apocalypse, Ephesus, Antioch, and Smyrna, whilst they remained faithful, and on the angels or bishops of the two latter, Ignatius and Polycarp, who won the double crown of Fathers of the Church and of Martyrs. The very personality of the beloved disciple seems to have been stamped upon them. If, as it is said, the way in which Lacordaire in the pulpit pronounced the words "la vie n'est rien" so

impressed those who heard him that the words and the sound of his voice seemed almost to haunt them, we can imagine how St. John must have stirred the souls and influenced the lives of those who heard him utter those words which were continually on his lips, "My children, love one another." It was the lesson he had learnt on the breast of his Divine Master. No wonder that those beloved familiars and disciples of his, St. Polycarp and St. Ignatius, reached the heights of sanctity they did, and that their lives, like his own, are an abiding influence in the Church.

St. Polycarp was about six years younger than St. Ignatius, born therefore about 40 A.D., and would be a man of about sixty years of age when St. John died in A.D. 100, as he was one hundred and twenty when he was martyred in 160 A.D. St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp were both intimately associated with St. John for more than a generation, and probably with some of the other Apostles as well, and therefore before the close of the first century there were no men living who knew more intimately the mind of St. John or the mind of the Church and what that faith was which afterwards they sealed with their blood. We shall find accordingly that on this question of the devotion to her whom they had all but known, they both spoke and wrote with no uncertain sound. They were both, as Newman says, of the Apostolic family, and if their evidence can be shown as witnessing to the Catholic doctrine of the homage and

reverence paid to the Blessed Virgin as the Virgin Mother of God, and opposed to the innovations of the reformers, it can hardly be regarded as other than decisive that that doctrine is apostolic.

It is really worth while for any Christian to reflect and remember what manner of man St. Polycarp was. His life and his death have alike a strange interest. His prayer, here inserted, spoken aloud while standing on his funeral pile just before his martyrdom, is surely one of the most soul-stirring ever offered by man to his Creator, into whose presence he was about to enter: "O Almighty Lord God, Father of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, God of angels and powers, and every creature, and of all the race of the just who live in Thy presence, I bless Thee for having been pleased in Thy goodness to bring me to this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs, and partake of the chalice of Thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit, amongst whom grant me to be received this day as a pleasing sacrifice, such a one as Thou Thyself hast prepared, that so Thou mayest accomplish in me a good death what Thou, O good and faithful God, hast foreknown. Wherefore for all things I praise, bless, and glorify Thee, through the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, with whom to Thee and the Holy Ghost be glory now and

for ever and ever." This prayer gives us a vivid insight into the whole nature and life of the man; it enables us to see how those great pillars of the Church like St. Polycarp and St. Ignatius became the miracles of holiness they were; how their heroic deaths were but the natural completion of their saintly lives, because in their case the living presence of our Lord on earth was still felt; because they lived in the presence of Him who had just ascended, and the echoes of whose voice they seemed still to hear.

This sublime prayer of St. Polycarp so lingers on the memory that one almost feels as if one had been listening to the disembodied spirit just mounting to its God—to the beautiful soul just on the point of changing its vision of the unseen for the actual Presence. His face must have been like Stephen's, "as if it had been the face of an angel." Not for nothing did St. Polycarp drink in the words of "the beloved disciple," of him whom St. Columbville calls St. John of the Breast, to whom alone of the Apostles it was given to watch the mortal anguish of his Lord, and to stand by the deaths, first of the Son and then of the Mother. Strange that these two glorious martyrs were in the order of Providence placed so close to that city sanctified by the last years and death of the Blessed Virgin, St. Polycarp at Smyrna, just beside Ephesus, and St. Ignatius at Antioch, within easy reach of it—that Antioch which first gave the followers of her son the

name which was to fill the earth—Christians. We can well believe that our Lord, on quitting the earth, left His Blessed Mother behind Him in order that she might give counsel to the infant Church and that the early Christians might have recourse to her in their afflictions, their persecutions, and their necessities.

CHAPTER V.

THERE is surely something remarkable in the fact that it was in this city where the Blessed Virgin spent the last years of her life—where she died, and where the tradition of there having dwelt amongst them the Mother of the Lord, and all the circumstances of her death, surrounded by the Apostles, must have been handed down from father to son, and have been an abiding influence—that it was in this very city that the Divinity of our Lord was defined and declared as the faith of Christendom, and that His Blessed Mother was declared Θεοτόκος. The connection of Ephesus with her could not have been more close; not only did she die there, but the Council of Ephesus for ever associated it with her name.

Of the assembling of that Council and the momentous issues decided at it, a Manual of Church History has given the following brief account:—

"When the Spirit of Error had recoiled, baffled from the attacks on the mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity, original sin, and grace, he made renewed and more subtle efforts to shake the Catholic faith in the great mystery of the Incarnation.

"It had ever been believed in the Church that Jesus Christ is the Divine Word made flesh,

and that there are consequently in Him two natures and one person. Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, began, in an evil hour, to teach that there are in our Lord two separate persons. As he feared to assail openly the Catholic dogma, he began by teaching that the Blessed Virgin should not be called Mother of God, but only Mother of Christ; thus drawing a distinction between the person of the Eternal Word and that of Christ. This novel doctrine was so opposed to universal belief that it occasioned great scandal, both amongst the clergy and the laity. The first time that the laity heard this teaching, they fled from the Church to testify their abhorrence of the blasphemer who had uttered it. This instinctive movement of faith is a thing much to be noted. The multitude may not always reason soundly, but they believe implicitly, and feel keenly; their souls shrink sensitively from heresy, they know not why. They detect it by a divine instinct, by the unction from the Holy One. Nestorius was a great man. He was Patriarch of Constantinople, then beginning to be regarded as the second see in Christendom; he was high in favour at Court; he was their own bishop, but no sooner did he utter words of heresy than his simple flock fled shuddering from him. It has pleased God to permit these successive heresies; and at the very moment of the Church's need he has raised up and prepared for the conflict some saintly doctor to defend the truth impugned. The instrument chosen of

God to overthrow Nestorius was St. Cyril of Alexandria. When this holy bishop heard of the impious novelty broached at Constantinople, he published a treatise in which he states clearly and simply the mystery of the Incarnation. 'I am astonished,' he says, 'that any one can doubt whether the Blessed Virgin can be called the Mother of God; for, if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, the holy Virgin Mother must be Mother of God. This is the faith the Apostles have handed down to us, this is the teaching of our forefathers in the faith, not that the nature of the Divine Word had its origin in Mary, but that in her was formed, and animated with a reasonable soul, the Sacred Body to which the Divine Word is hypostatically united; and hence we say that the Word was born according to the flesh. Thus, in the natural order, though a mother has no part in the creation of the soul, she is regarded and called the mother of the whole man, and not of his body alone.' This treatise of St. Cyril was soon spread throughout the East, and reassured the faithful whom the new-fangled heresy had scandalised. St. Cyril wrote privately to Nestorius to bring him back to the faith. He exhorted him to appease the indignation of the Church by giving to the ever-blessed Virgin the title of Mother of God. Unhappily this letter had no effect — the conversion of the leader of a heresy or schism is one of the rarest miracles of grace. The holy bishop then applied to Pope St. Celestine; he drew a

melancholy picture of the state of the Church in Constantinople, and implored him to apply a remedy to the evil. Nestorius had also sent to the Pope his writings, authenticated by his signature. The Sovereign Pontiff thereupon held a council at Rome to examine the writings of Nestorius; his teaching was seen to be plainly opposed to that of the Fathers, and was condemned without a dissentient voice. St. Celestine notified this decision to the Eastern bishops; and in the letter he wrote to St. Cyril he applauds his zeal and diligence; declares that he accepts his statement of the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation as perfectly accurate; and adds that if Nestorius did not, within a time assigned, retract and anathematise his heresy he should be cut off from the Church as a dead branch. Nestorius was intractable, like all other innovators; opposition irritated his pride and hardened his obstinate heart. In spite of the strong protectors he had at Court, Theodosius felt that the tumults at Constantinople could not be allayed until the question was finally settled, and he resolved to convoke a general Council at Ephesus.

"This resolution gave universal satisfaction, and nearly two hundred bishops, from all parts of Christendom, assembled at Ephesus. St. Cyril presided as legate of the Holy See; Nestorius came accompanied by the Count Candidian, one of his principal supporters. He refused, however, to attend the sittings of the Council, although he was three times summoned.

He pleaded as his reason for non-attendance that the Patriarch of Antioch and his suffragans had not arrived. Meanwhile the Council was opened. On a raised throne in the middle of the church was placed a copy of the four gospels, to represent the presence and illumination of Jesus Christ, who has promised to be with those who are gathered in His name. This solemn circumstance has been imitated in all succeeding councils. The bishops were ranged, according to their rank, on either side of the church. As Nestorius refused to appear in person, the Council could ascertain his doctrines from his writings alone. These were read, and when the reading was finished, there was one unanimous cry: 'Anathema to these impious errors! Anathema to all who hold or teach this impious doctrine! It is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and to the writings of the Fathers.' They then read the letter of Pope Celestine to Nestorius, and several passages of St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, and others, which were contrasted with the propositions of the heresiarch. Meanwhile the greatest excitement prevailed in the city. The doors of the church were besieged by an impatient crowd. The decision was pronounced —the ever-blessed Virgin was declared to be the Mother of God. The word Θεοτόκος, or Mother of God, was thus the touchstone of Nestorianism, and the compendious symbol of the Catholic faith, just as the word ὁμοούσιος, or consubstantial, had been in the Arian contro-

versy. The glorious tidings were taken up and repeated from mouth to mouth. Blessings were invoked upon the Fathers of the Council, and the city was illuminated to express the delight of the inhabitants at this confirmation of the glories of the Mother of God. The bishops wrote to acquaint the Emperor with their decision; but Candidian, who had been sent to protect the Council, intercepted their letters, and conveyed a false report to the Emperor. Every means was employed to conceal the truth from Theodosius, until the bishops bethought them of entrusting their despatches to a mendicant, who kept them concealed in the hollow of a cane which he held in his hand as he begged alms on the road. The Emperor thereupon banished Nestorius to Oasis, in Egypt, where he died miserably in a short time. The Council of Ephesus was held A.D. 431."

It is evident that Ephesus at this period had become thoroughly Christian, for another account tells us that the people were excited and overjoyed to an extraordinary degree. "On all sides they cried out: 'The enemy of the Virgin is overcome; blessed be the great, august, glorious Mother of God!' When the Fathers came out of the church, blessings were invoked upon them, and the crowd, holding lighted torches, conducted them in triumph; perfumes were burnt in the streets through which they were to pass; the sky was illumined by a thousand fires; nothing was wanting to the pomp of this pious exultation, nor to the

brilliancy of the victory of the Mother of God over her enemies. It is said by some that in this Council the prayer was composed which the Church has added to the angelical salutation: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.'"

So intense was the enthusiasm that a sight unparalleled in the history of the Church was then witnessed, of a whole people surrendering themselves to an almost frenzied joy, when by the universal voice of Christendom the attack on the Blessed Virgin was repelled and she was proclaimed Θεοτόκος. No such scene was witnessed for fifteen hundred years, till at the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception in Rome in our own day, the hearts of myriads were again moved and men wept for joy. As the Virgin had already been declared by the Holy Spirit "Blessed amongst women," so at Ephesus, the third Ecumenical Council, using those awe-inspiring words, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," declared her to be the Mother of God. Nestorius had made his assault at once upon her Divine Son and upon her, and once again she crushed the serpent under her heel—once again did the Church salute her with the triumphant cry, "Interemisti omnes hæreses."

It is unfortunately too true that many Protestants are at heart so far Nestorians that they would like to deny the Blessed Virgin's title of Mother of God, and yet they may be

quite certain of this, that, down to the Reformation their forefathers would have been as much scandalised at any attack on the Mother of God as were the people of Ephesus. How is the position of those who at the Reformation rejected the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Real Presence, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, and the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, any better or stronger than that of the Arians, the Nestorians, and the Eutychians, who at an earlier period denied fundamental doctrines of Christianity and cut themselves off from Christendom? The Arians took up exactly the same position as the Reformers—the right of private judgment. If the Reformers were justified, then the Arians and Nestorians were justified, and Christianity must have perished. It is noteworthy that two of the most violent attacks have been directed simultaneously against our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, the first as we have just seen at once on His Divinity and on her claim to be called Θεοτόκος.

The second attack was that of Leo the Isaurian. To quote the aforesaid manual: "Other emperors of Constantinople had patronised the condemned heresies, but he [Leo] aspired to found a sect. He had conceived a prejudice against the use and veneration of images, and pronounced the Church's custom idolatrous. He resolved to destroy them altogether, and he commenced his undertaking by issuing an edict commanding the images of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin,

and of the saints to be removed from the churches. This attempt, so opposed to the principles and practice of the universal Church, excited the indignation of the Christian world; and the inhabitants of Constantinople openly expressed their discontent. Germanus, their patriarch, boldly opposed the Imperial innovation. He had at first tried to enlighten the obstinate Leo in private conferences; he pointed out to him that the cultus paid to the sacred images was paid to those whom they represented, just as people honour the portrait or the statue of the Emperor; that this relative cultus had ever been rendered to the images of our Lord and of His Blessed Mother from the earliest ages; and that it was an act of impious audacity to assail a tradition so venerable and so universal. But the Emperor had not light enough to perceive his own darkness, and stubbornly persisted in his error. The patriarch referred the question to Pope St. Gregory II, who thanked him for his zeal in combating the rising heresy. The Pope then wrote to the Emperor, exhorting him to revoke his edict, and reminding him that he was not competent to decide on such a question or to innovate in any way upon the faith or discipline of the Church. The Emperor replied as men are wont to reply who can wield force more readily than argument. He burnt all the sacred images in one of the public places of the city, and whitewashed the walls which were covered with paintings. He ordered the large crucifix which

had been put up by Constantine at the entrance of the palace to be hewn down. Some women who were on the spot implored the officer to desist from his impious task, but their prayers were disregarded; he mounted a ladder and began to strike with a hatchet the divine countenance of our Lord. The women, beside themselves with grief and indignation, drew away the foot of the ladder, and the officer fell down and was killed on the spot. The women were condemned to death, with ten other persons suspected of having encouraged them. The patriarch was driven from his see, and died in exile in his ninetieth year. These events took place in 737."

The answer of the Church was the second Council of Nicæa, held in the church of St. Sophia in 787, under Pope Adrian I, attended by 367 bishops. In this Council the Iconoclasts (or image-breakers) were condemned for rejecting the use of holy images, and the practice of paying them due respect. The last session of this Council was held at Constantinople. Judgment was delivered by the Council in these words: "We decree that sacred images shall not only be set up in our churches and graven upon the vessels of the sanctuary and upon all ecclesiastical ornaments, but in private houses and by the wayside, for the sight of the images of our Lord Jesus Christ, His holy Mother, the Apostles and Saints, disposes our hearts to remember and to honour those whom they represent. We are bound to

render them honour and reverence, but not the worship due to God alone. We may burn tapers and incense before them, as is usual before the Cross and the holy Gospels, because the honour paid to the image is referred to the original. And this is the doctrine of the Fathers and of the Catholic Church."

The doctrines of the Iconoclasts were revived by the Reformers of the sixteenth century. This account proves clearly two things: first, that the cultus or honour paid to the Blessed Virgin existed in 714 in the reign of Leo the Isaurian, as he attacked this manifestation of it with the most sanguinary fury; and, second, that the letter of the Patriarch Germanus proves that he could assert as a thing indisputable and acknowledged by all men, that this cultus had existed from the beginning of Christianity, his words being "that this relative cultus had ever been rendered to the images of our Lord and of His Blessed Mother from the earliest ages, and that it was an act of impious audacity to assail a tradition so venerable and so universal."

Would those who talk of the corruptions of Rome explain what they mean, they might just as well, and with equal reason or unreason, talk of the corruptions of Ephesus, of Antioch, of Alexandria, and of Constantinople. What alone had been corrupted, and what the Iconoclasts sought to corrupt, were what St. John, in the Apocalypse tells us, such as they bartered and had for sale—the souls of men.

Surely, before condemning Catholic doctrine, Protestants might ascertain what Catholic doctrine is ; but this they seldom or never do. As a rule they condemn something which is not Catholic doctrine at all, and then rate Catholics for believing what they don't believe. They are controversial Don Quixotes, ever tilting against the windmills, and all attempts at explanation are apparently as useless as the attempt to enlighten their forerunner. Seriously, however, there is no excuse for either misunderstanding or misstating what St. Cyril of Alexandria has so clearly explained, viz., the grounds on which the Council of Ephesus declared the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of God ; but as a somewhat fuller explanation is given in his *Catholic Belief* by Di Bruno, those Protestants whose desire it is to act in good faith should ponder it.

Di Bruno says : "The Blessed Virgin Mary is rightfully called Mother of God ; for Jesus Christ, God Incarnate (that is, God made man) is truly her Son, as St. Luke (i. 35) expressly states : 'The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' St. Elizabeth calls the Blessed Virgin 'the Mother of my Lord' (St. Luke i. 43). The reason why many Protestants object to join in the affection due to our Lady, Mother of God, is because they do not properly comprehend and realise the import of this title, 'Mother of God.' Let us then see what this title means. It does not mean that Mary is the Mother of the Divinity, if by

divinity be understood the divine Nature, for the divine Nature is uncreated, eternal, before all worlds. Nor does it mean that Mary is the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, according to His divine Nature, which would be the same as being Mother of the Divinity, to assert which would be not only absurd but blasphemous. Nor does it mean that Mary became the mother of a person that did not exist before, as is the case naturally with all ordinary mothers; for the Son of God, who became the Son of Mary, is in Himself co-eternal with the Father. But it means that Mary is Mother of God the Son, with regard to His human nature, which He assumed in time, and which human nature He had not before He took it from Mary, for until then He possessed only one nature, the Divine. The Blessed Virgin Mary, therefore, is justly styled, 'Mother of God' because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, whose humanity is assumed by and united to a Divine Person, that is, God the Son."

With reference to the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and of the angels and saints, Di Bruno says: "That the saints can know something of what passes on earth, and can sympathise with us, may plainly be inferred from what our Saviour says in St. Matthew (xxii. 30), 'that the Saints shall be as the angels of God in heaven': and from what He said in St. Luke (xv. 7, 10), 'I say to you there shall be joy before the angels of God

upon one sinner doing penance.' If angels see a sinner doing penance, the saints who are like the angels of God are able to see the same. Again, the rich man in hell (St. Luke xvi. 27) felt sympathy for his brothers on earth; we can but suppose that the saints in heaven have no less sympathy for their relatives and friends." On the kindred subject, the reverence paid to holy images, Di Bruno is equally explicit: it is true, he says, that the latter part of the first Commandment declares, "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing," but this is explained by the words that follow: "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them."

It was thus understood by the Jews, who, by the command of God, placed two graven images of the Cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant (3 Kings vii. 23), and other images of angels in the Temple of Solomon (2 Chronicles iii. 10, 11). In the same way, as showing God pays honour to the relics of His saints, and wills that we should pay them honour, we are told in the Fourth Book of Kings (2 Kings of the Protestant version) that: "Some that were burying a man . . . cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus (Elisha). And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet" (xiii. 21); and (in Acts v. 15 and Acts xix. 12) we learn that the shadow of St. Peter and the handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched the body of St. Paul cured the sick. We now come to the all-important evidence of the Fathers with reference

to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. To the earliest of the Fathers, that is, to those in immediate contact with the Apostles, or a disciple of the Apostles, Cardinal Newman has given the name of the Apostolic Family, for example, to St. Polycarp and St. Ignatius, disciples of St. John, and to St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, the disciple of St. Polycarp.

The evidence of the Apostolic Family cannot be regarded as otherwise than conclusive, whether on the fundamental doctrine of the Catholic Church, that is, of a Church asserting Divine Authority, or on any particular doctrine. Sir T. More, when virtually the same question arose in his day—on what foundation he rested his belief—replied there was only one answer. Any and every controverted point must stand this test—was the doctrine in question, or was it not, compatible with the general law of Christ's Church? and it was on this ground he took his stand in rejecting as he did Henry's innovation of his supremacy of the Church. Catholics, moreover, know that if this was the foundation of his belief, in his rejection of the supremacy, it was equally the source of his adhesion and that of all Catholics to the Apostolic doctrine of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

As no one has ever stated this fundamental doctrine of the divine guidance of the Church based on the promise of our Lord—"Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world"—with more precision and

power than Bossuet; we give his words:—

"God gives His Holy Spirit not to teach some truth, but to teach all truth. Never, therefore, will He permit any one of these truths to be extinguished in the body of the Universal Church. What is once believed in the whole Church is always believed in it, and though it be objected, for instance, that transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Invocation of Saints, Veneration of Saints, etc., are, indeed, to be found in all the Oriental communions, but yet were not always there, and that it is in this perpetuity is placed the stress of the proof, and the infallibility of the Universal Church, the fallacy plainly is that there can be no belief in the Church Universal—the perpetual assistance of the Holy Ghost, which does not comprehend in this acknowledgment not only all times together, but also each time in particular; this perpetuity including them all: from whence it follows that throughout the whole duration of the Church, he will never be able to point out a time when the error prevails which the Holy Ghost has bound Himself to preserve her from, nor from one more than another, therefore there never can be any. The Catholic alone believes in the promise. What makes our adversaries stop at this is their having nothing but a human and wavering faith. But the Catholic, whose faith is divine and firm, will say without hesitating, if the Holy Ghost has promised His Universal Church to assist her indefinitely against errors, therefore, against

all: and if against all, therefore, always: and as often as one shall find in any certain time a doctrine established in the whole Catholic Church, such can never be impeached of novelty, but by error." But to come at once from the general to the particular. What was the doctrine of Christendom regarding the invocation of the Blessed Virgin in the fourth century? Bossuet writes: "In the following words of the English Test Act of 1678, the invocation, or, as they call it, the adoration of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, with the sacrifice of the Mass are condemned 'as acts of superstition and idolatry' not absolutely, but as they are now used in the Church of Rome." But the reason of this was, that the English are too well versed in antiquity to be ignorant that the Fathers of the fourth century (to ascend no higher at present) did invoke the Blessed Virgin and the saints. They know that St. Gregory of Nazianzum, Archbishop of Constantinople, the chosen friend of St. Basil, and also called the Theologian, approves expressly, in the mouth of a martyr, that piety which moved her to beg of the Blessed Virgin, "that she would assist a virgin engaged in danger." They know that all the Fathers have made, and solemnly approved in their homilies, the like invocations addressed to saints, nay, in respect of them, have even used the word Invocation. As for that of adoration, they know likewise it is equivocal no less among the Holy Fathers than in Scripture, and does

not always signify rendering to a person divine honours; and for this reason also St. Gregory Nazianzum made no difficulty in many places of saying that the relics of martyrs were adored, and that God did not disdain to confirm such adoration by miracles. The English are too well read in antiquity to be ignorant of this doctrine and these practices of the ancient Church, and bear her too great a veneration to accuse her of superstition and idolatry; it is this which makes them use this restriction which we observe in their Test Act, and suppose in the Church of Rome a kind of invocation and adoration different from that of the Fathers, because they were sensible—without this precaution, the test would be no more subscribed with a good conscience by the learned Protestants than by Catholics.

Now, to borrow Bossuet's expression, let us ascend higher than the fourth century. At this point we avail ourselves of the lectures of the Archbishop of Melbourne, authoritative alike from his high position as a prelate of the Church and from his thorough research. Dr. Carr says: "In immediate historic sequence comes St. Ignatius. He was martyred very early in the second century. Various dates are given, 104, 107, and 115. Of these the second appears the most probable. Like St. Polycarp, he, too, was a disciple of St. John, and was the second in succession to St. Peter in the see of Antioch. Theodoret expressly declares that he was consecrated by St. Peter, and St. Athanasius seems

to have been of the same opinion. Of his agreement with the doctrines taught by the Sovereign Pontiff now happily reigning, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, for, whenever he does refer to doctrine, there is no reason to question its unmistakably Roman character. What has been lately called the harmless term Θεοτόκος, which expresses the doctrine of Mary's divine maternity, represents to him the very foundation on which the whole Christian edifice is built. He does not hesitate to say that the Blood of Christ is the Blood of God (1 Eph. 1). He uses the very language which has been made a reproach to Catholics by some who have not realised the doctrine of the Incarnation, nor the testimony of Scripture and Antiquity. He speaks of 'the passion of God' (ad. Rom. 6), and says, boldly and unambiguously, that our God Jesus the Christ was conceived in the womb by Mary (ad Eph. 18)."

The Apostolic Fathers do not write directly against heretics, and do not profess to give a complete account of the Church's doctrine. But it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of their utterances when they do make reference to doctrine, for they are the utterances of teachers who enjoyed the privilege of personal communion with one or other of the Apostles. So far, indeed, as dogmatic teaching is concerned, the Apostolic Fathers may be said to reduce themselves to Ignatius. He speaks out clearly on a number of doctrinal questions around which, especially in these later centuries,

a fierce controversy has been raging. He asserts the truth of the Sacred Humanity so boldly, that one would almost think that he had before his mind the heresy of the fifth century regarding the union of the Divine and human natures. He takes the ground away from Nestorianism. Our Lord is with him both "Son of Mary and Son of God" (1 Eph. 5; Lightfoot, Vol. II). "Our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived in the womb by Mary" (2 *Ibid.*). This is his clear definition of that doctrine of Catholic faith which afterwards found fitting expression in the term Θεοτόκος, a title which Dr. Rentoul denounces. A distinguished American Protestant divine, Dr. Hevin, however, would tell him: "No man whose tongue falters in pronouncing Mary Mother of God can be orthodox at heart on the article of Christ's person. The words of St. Ignatius are replete with theological meaning. Nor was this language about the Blessed Virgin peculiar to him alone. With St. Irenaeus, too, the prerogatives of Mary form an integral part of the theology of the Incarnation. He sees in her the second Eve, and as through the disobedience of the first Eve death came both to herself and to all mankind, so the obedience of Mary was the cause of salvation to herself and all mankind. And it was not St. Irenaeus only who drew a parallel between Mary and Eve. As Cardinal Newman has pointed out (letter to Dr. Pusey), it appears in the earliest times and in the most distant quarters of

the Church—in Justin Martyr in the dialogue with Trypho, and in Tertullian. Devotion to our Lady, according to Protestants, is quite modern in its origin, and yet the slightest acquaintance with the Fathers traces the doctrine on which it is founded to the second century, and from whom could the Fathers of the second century have got it except from the Apostles? According to St. Jerome, St. Irenaeus was a pupil of Papias, a disciple of the Apostles; and Tertullian, a contemporary, styles him "the most diligent searcher of all doctrine." Through his master, St. Polycarp, he received the tradition and imbibed the spirit of the Beloved Disciple. The importance of the testimony of St. Irenaeus cannot be too highly estimated. He speaks for the East and for the West, for he had spent his early years in Asia Minor; he was for many years Bishop of Lyons; twice at least he came into close relations with Rome, and he made a visit to the Roman Church just before he undertook his episcopal charge. He was in the forefront of the three chief controversies of his age—on Gnosticism, on the Montanist prophecies, and on the celebration of Easter. Among the Fathers of his day he alone, as Cardinal Newman tells us, can be included in what may be called the Apostolic Family. Bishop Lightfoot attaches great importance to him as a witness to the Christian belief in the second century. He lays emphasis on "the historical background" which brings that testimony into bold relief. St. Irenaeus, he reminds

us, "was connected directly with the Apostles and the apostolic age by two distinct personal links, if not more. His testimony must be regarded as distinctly representing three Churches at least"—Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul. Thus "he is backed by a whole phalanx of past and contemporaneous authority" (Lightfoot on Irenaeus). It would be difficult to find in biographical literature so pathetic a word-picture as St. Irenaeus has painted of the relations between St. Polycarp, his own master, and St. John, who was in turn master of St. Polycarp. He reminds a former friend—Florinus—of the teaching which both of them had received from the lips of the aged saint. "I saw you," he writes, "in lower Asia with Polycarp while I was still a boy, and you were distinguishing yourself in the Imperial Court, and trying to win Polycarp's good opinion. I remember those times better than the things of to-day (since the instruction we get in youth grows with the soul and becomes one with it), so that I can tell even the very place where the blessed Polycarp was wont to sit and discourse; and also his comings in, his walks, the complexion of his life, and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was used to tell of it; as also his intimacy with those that had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning His miracles, His doctrines; all these were told by Polycarp in

consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of salvation. These things by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and these same facts I am always in the habit, by the grace of God, of recalling faithfully to mind." Archbishop Carr continues: "Amongst these traditions which St. Polycarp received from St. John and handed down to Irenaeus were a tender devotion to our Blessed Lord in the Sacrifice and Sacrament of His love (*see* v.g. Iren. adv. Haer. iv. 18) as well as to His Immaculate Mother, whose glory St. Irenaeus has proclaimed in language remarkable for its scientific precision, and yet glowing with filial affection (iii. 22, 4; v. 19, 1)."

It is manifest from one of the extracts just given that the negative evidence of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the time of Irenaeus, that is, in the second century, simply could not be stronger, since in that century the only questions raised, in each of which he was in the forefront, were three, viz., on Gnosticism, on the Montanist prophecies, and on the celebration of Easter. There can be no stronger proof of how unquestioned and universal was the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and what a hold it had on the Christians of the second century, than the fact that no one was found daring enough to raise the question. Even two centuries later, when it was raised by Nestorius, the Christians

of Ephesus and of the world were beside themselves with indignation.

"It is difficult," says Mr. Hemans, "to determine the date when the practice of invoking saints had origin, though certain that it prevailed before the end of the fourth century. The first instance in any literary document of invocation addressed to the Virgin Mary occurs in the 'Life of St. Justine,' by St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishop of his native place from A.D. 328, deceased 373 (about 390)."

The same writer continues: "The gradual elevation of the Blessed Virgin to her ultimately attained rank in devotional regards may be traced through several stages. She appears at first, among subjects for early art, in those scenes alone from which she could not be omitted—the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi. If there be one exception (and in this case the classic style indicates antiquity), it is in a picture in the cemetery named after St. Priscilla, representing her seated, with the Child on her lap, a star hovering above, and a man vested in a pallium, with a scroll in one hand, standing before this group while pointing to the star. De Rossi and others assume a very early date, if not the Apostolic age, for this picture, and that the figure pointing to the star must be intended for Isaiah. I should say that the mystic intent of this picture is to adumbrate the prophecies of Isaiah respecting the advent of the Light of the World, and the birth of the Messiah from a Virgin Mother.

Not till the fifth century are the subjects of the Annunciation and the Presentation in the Temple (namely, among the mosaics at St. Maria Maggiore) introduced in the range of art where Mary has necessarily her place. On gilt tazze she is sometimes the central figure, with arms extended in the act of prayer, between SS. Peter and Paul, or other saints. With the Infant Christ in her arms, she is seen much more frequently in later art; and this group became a symbol of orthodoxy after the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) had conferred upon Mary the lofty title of Θεοτόκος, 'Mother of God.'"

It is now three centuries since the Reformation, and yet, in spite of all the Bible Societies, Catholics are unaccountably left still in the dark. Would those who know all about Mariolatry, and ring the changes on it, tell us something about it—impart even a little of their information? When and where did it begin; by whom was it introduced; in what age; in what country; by what bishop or archbishop; in what church? We know that in the first general Council of Nicæa, Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria, was condemned for denying the divinity of the Word, or Son of God, and His consubstantiality with the Father. We know that in the first Council of Constantinople, held in 381, the followers of Macedonius were condemned for denying the Divinity of the Holy Ghost and His consubstantiality with the Father and the Son. And we know, in fine,

that Nestorius was deposed from his see of Constantinople, of which he was archbishop or patriarch, for maintaining that in Jesus Christ there were two distinct persons, and denying to the Blessed Virgin her title of Mother of God; and we know that in the fourth General Council, that of Chalcedon, now called Scutari, facing Constantinople, Eutyches, Abbot of Constantinople, and Dicscorus, Archbishop of Alexandria, were condemned for teaching that in Jesus Christ there was only one nature. We know, therefore, that Nestorianism was a corruption; we know who attempted to introduce it and that it was condemned; but when, and in what Council, was any one accused of bringing in the new doctrine of so-called Mariolatry? The very name was never heard of till Luther, Calvin and John Knox held their General Council in the sixteenth century. Surely, however, the gospel was revealed as much to all the centuries that preceded the sixteenth as to it, nor was there any special promise made that it alone was to be preserved from error. But when Protestant writers denounce the devotion as a corruption of Rome and as Mariolatry, we have a right to demand their proofs. Who introduced the corruption? Let them go back to the Apostles. Was it St. John the Evangelist misinterpreting the words "Son, behold thy mother"; was it any of the "Fathers of the Apostolic Family"; any one of the Greek or Latin Fathers; some successor of Athanasius at Alexandria, of Chrysostom at Constantinople

of Augustine at Hippo, or Ambrose at Milan? Or, if we come on to the sixth century, was it St. Augustine and his forty Benedictine monks who introduced it at Canterbury; or, perhaps, that one of them, Justin, who became the first Bishop of Rochester? Or did St. Bernard introduce it at Clairvaux; or William of Wykeham at Winchester College, when he erected that statue of the Blessed Virgin which to this day some of the scholars still salute? Or, through a very different man, was it Henry VIII who began his will "In the name of God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Mary, Virgin Mother of God, I, Henry, etc."? Or could it have been Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, who, in St. Mary's in the High Street, Oxford, in a niche outside the church, erected the statue still there of the Blessed Virgin, the erection of which later on formed one of the articles of his impeachment? Or are the kings, bishops and people of England responsible, who century after century from the introduction of Christianity covered England with cathedrals, and in every one of them a Lady Chapel?

Or perhaps the devotion was introduced by some one of the great kings or emperors who founded churches—by St. Helen, the mother of Constantine, who at Bethlehem in the fourth century founded the church of Our Lady, which with its altars and mosaics and statues is there to this day. Or did the Greek emperors introduce Mariolatry in the church of St.

Sophia at Constantinople—it certainly was there; or did the Capets in Paris at Notre Dame in the church founded centuries ago in A.D. 365? Charlemagne, too! Where did he get his devotion to the Mother of God? Christianity had only been just introduced in Germany by St. Boniface, its apostle, an Englishman born at Crediton, Devonshire, when Charlemagne exhibited his devotion in the most striking manner. He succeeded his father, Pepin, in 768. Almost immediately after he built in honour of the Blessed Virgin the magnificent church of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, where he was crowned king of the Romans by Pope Leo III. With Charlemagne originated the custom, afterwards observed, of crowning the king of the Romans in the chapel, and before the altar, of the Blessed Virgin. Three centuries later an extraordinary incident occurred in the Cathedral of Spires showing the fervent devotion of the German people. The words "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria" were the words of the great St. Bernard, first sounded by him in a moment of enthusiastic religious fervour in the celebrated cathedral of Spires. To commemorate the event the authorities of the town had these titles of our Lady placed conspicuously on the walls of the church, that after generations might recognise their constant and tender devotion to the Mother of God. It was the same all over Europe. The devotion was simply a portion of the Christian faith and preached wherever

Christianity was preached. In Normandy, in A.D. 912, no sooner was the new Duke Rollo baptised than he asked the Archbishop of Rouen which were the most venerated churches in his province. The prelate mentioned Notre Dame of Rouen, of Bayeux and Evreux, the church of Mont St. Michel, that of St. Peter at Rouen, and Jumieges. "And what saint is most revered in these parts?" asked the duke. "St. Denis, the Apostle of France." Accordingly, before dividing his territory among his leading captains, he set apart a portion for God, for the Blessed Virgin, and for the saints named by the Archbishop. What a marvellous thing that all these ages, all these countries, all these peoples were practising this devotion, and yet we can find no beginning of it: the churches are there, the altars are there, the devotion is there, and yet we are told it was suddenly introduced—grew up in a night. Aachen and Spires were not Latin towns, neither French, nor Italian, nor Spanish; they were of the chosen Reformation stock, and yet they were no better than their neighbours. Mariolatry was rampant amongst rulers and ruled alike. Is it to be supposed that the Christians in all the centuries preceding the Reformation did not know what to believe, that as a matter of fact they were not Christians at all, but what the Test Act and the Coronation Oath calls them—idolaters? Let those who hold that at the Reformation it was open to their fathers to pick and choose a religion, to

reject what they liked and to retain what they liked, contemplate present results. The agnostics and the infidels have bettered their instruction and denounce the Reformers — Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anglicans alike—denounce them as worse than Catholics because they sinned against the light, did not see that while affecting to remove corruptions they were perpetuating corruption; they, forsooth, saw there were corruptions and yet refused to see that Christianity itself was one huge corruption. Let Protestants contemplate the further results of modern infidelity, that is, in reality, of modern paganism, and of its message to mankind. What is now the condition of those vast multitudes over the earth whose forefathers gave up the Catholic faith, and who now in their turn have given up all faith? Let Protestants look round the world, read any description of the great Babylons of Europe and America, and see if their state does not tally in some of its most revolting features with that awful picture of the Roman pagan world, then going fast to its doom, given in the inspired pages of St. Paul. Newman makes Willis, one of the *dramatis personæ* in "Loss and Gain," say: "There is much in Catholic worship to strike a Protestant, but there is much which will perplex him; for instance, what Bateman has alluded to, our devotion to the Blessed Virgin."

"Surely," said Bateman, "this is a plain matter; it is quite impossible that the worship paid by Roman Catholics to the Blessed Mary

should not interfere with the supreme adoration due to the Creator alone." "This is just an instance in point," said Willis. "You see you are judging a priori; you know nothing of the state of the case from experience, but you say, "It must be; it can't be otherwise." This is the way a Protestant judges and comes to one conclusion. A Catholic, who acts, and does not speculate, feels the truth of the contrary." "Some things," said Bateman, "are so like axioms as to supersede trial. On the other hand, familiarity is very likely to hide from people the real evil of certain practices." "How strange it is," answered Willis, "that you don't perceive that this is the very argument which various sects urge against you Anglicans! For instance, the Unitarian says that the doctrine of the atonement must lead to our looking at the Father, not as a God of love, but of vengeance only; and he calls the doctrine of eternal punishment immoral. And so the Wesleyan or Baptist declares that it is an absurdity to suppose anyone can hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and really be spiritual, that the doctrine must have a numbing effect on the mind, and destroy its single reliance on the atonement of Christ. I will take another instance: Many a good Catholic, who never came across Anglicans, is as utterly unable to realise your position as you are to realise his. He cannot make out how you can be so illogical as not to go forward or backward; nay, he pronounces your professed state of mind impossible;

he does not believe in its existence. I may deplore your state; I may think you illogical, or worse; but I know it is a state which does exist. As, then, I admit that a person can profess one Catholic Church, yet without believing that the Roman Communion is it; so I put it to you, even as an *argumentum ad hominem*, whether you ought not to believe that we can honour our Blessed Lady as the first of creatures without interfering with the honour due to God. At most, you ought to call us only illogical; you ought not to deny that we do what we say we do." "I make a distinction," said Bateman; "it is quite possible, I fully grant, for an educated Romanist to distinguish between the devotion paid by him to the Blessed Virgin and the worship of God; I only say that the multitude will not distinguish." "I know you say so," answered Willis, "and still I repeat, not from experience, but on an a priori ground. You say, not 'it is so,' but 'it *must* be so.'"

Newman shows here plainly enough, and is compelled to labour the point, that the adoration we pay to God and the veneration and honour paid to the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God are entirely distinct. Surely it is a thing noteworthy, and which Protestants who want to get at the truth about the devotion to the Blessed Virgin might deem worthy of attention, that in those countries, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, where Christianity arose and was first preached, it is precisely in these countries that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin has

always existed, just as it exists to this day, and that it was in countries like England and Germany, where Christianity was not introduced for centuries later—in England till the end of the sixth century (of course, the mission of St. Augustine is here referred to), and in Germany till the eighth century—that the discovery was made that all Christendom had wandered from the truth, and that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin was Mariolatry. The evidence of Asia, where the first eight General Councils were held, and the testimony of all the rest of the world are against them. In Cyprus, to this day, where Paul and Luke preached and Barnabas died, the Christians pray as their fathers before them prayed since the time of the Apostles, and call on the Blessed Virgin to intercede for them and to help them, saying: Μητηρ Θεόυ Βοηθησον ημιν (Mother of God, help us). There, too, in this same Cyprus, eleven centuries later, in the May of 1191, England's lion-hearted king, Richard Cœur de Lion and his wife, Berengaria, in the church of Limasol, where they were crowned by the Archbishop of York King and Queen of England and of Cyprus, joined in the prayer which no Christian then dreamt of doubting—"Mother of God, pray for us." The Greek words, Βοηθησον ἡμιν, are even stronger than "Ora pro Nobis," and it should be remembered that the major part of the Gospels were first written in Greek. The very words of the Greek prayer may possibly have been first used by St. Luke, who saw and met the Blessed Virgin, for

by Barnabas, and have come down through the ages to the present generation of Cypriotes, from whose lips they can be heard pronounced by every inhabitant of the island. The devotion to the Blessed Virgin, therefore, was always in Cyprus, as elsewhere—it was there *ab initio.* It is absurd to say it is a corruption; if an Englishman now in Cyprus were hardy enough to say so to a Cypriote, he would laugh at him. Indeed, as Curzon in his "Monasteries of the Levant" tells us, Easterns have their prejudices just like Englishmen, and can hardly be brought to believe that people who reject fasting as idle and unnecessary, if not unchristian, and who pay no honour to the Mother of God are Christians at all. The faith of Cyprus and of the East proves the truth of what we are told in the "Acts of the Apostles," that in the beginning of the Church "the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one mind" (Acts iv. 32). If so, then it was not in the first century that the devotion was questioned, just as the Ignatian Epistles and the writings of St. Irenaeus prove that it was not questioned in the second.

CHAPTER VI.

NEWMAN, who had an intellect penetrating as light, lifts the veil as we have seen from a subject purposely obscured. He tells us what the devotion to the Blessed Virgin is, and what it is not, and shows clearly the distinction between the homage paid to her and the adoration paid to her Divine Son. In a further passage from "Loss and Gain," which will be now given, he emphasises this distinction, though that was not his immediate object, nor, indeed, his object at all.

In this passage Newman gives us his magnificent and soul-stirring description of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of that sublime Sacrifice which is the supreme act of worship offered by Catholics to God alone. The significance of the passage for the present purpose is that it lets us see the immeasurable distance between the adoration offered to the Creator and even the most intense devotion to the Mother of that Creator. The fact that that adoration is offered to the Real Presence in the Eucharistic Sacrifice makes no difference for the purposes of comparison.

"I declare, to me," said Willis, and he clasped his hands on his knees, and looked forward as if soliloquising, "to me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, as it is among us. I

could attend Masses for ever, and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words—it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar, in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. This is that awful event which is the end, and is the interpretation, of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace, they are instruments of what is far higher—of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on as if impatient to fulfil their mission. Quickly they go, the whole is quick, for they are all parts of one integral action. Quickly they go, for they are awful words of sacrifice, they are a work too great to delay upon; as when it was said in the beginning, 'What thou doest, do quickly.' Quickly they pass, for the Lord Jesus goes with them, as He passed along the lake in the days of His flesh, quickly calling first one and then another. Quickly they pass, because as the lightning which shineth from one part of the heaven unto the other, so is the coming of the Son of Man. Quickly they pass, for they are as the words of Moses, when the Lord came down in the cloud, calling on the name of the Lord as He passed by, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.' And as Moses on the mountain, so we too 'make

haste, and bow our heads to the earth and adore; so we, all around, each in his place, look out for the great Advent, waiting for the moving of the water.' Each in his place, with his own heart, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intention, with his own prayers, separate but concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation; not painfully and hopelessly following a hard form of prayers from beginning to end, but like a concert of musical instruments, each different, but concurring in a sweet harmony, we take our part with God's priest, supporting him, yet guided by him. There are little children there, and old men, and simple labourers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens, and there are penitents; but out of these many minds rises one eucharistic hymn, and the great action is the measure and the scope of it. And oh, my dear Bateman," he added, turning to him, "you ask me whether this is not a formal, unreasonable service. It is wonderful"! he cried, rising up, "quite wonderful! When will these dear good people be enlightened? O Sapientia, fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia, O Adonai, O Clavis David et expectatio gentium, veni ad salvandum nos, Domine Deus Noster."

In this sublime description of Newman's, Protestants have evidence of the effect in the tremendous Sacrifice of the Mass of this

"Evocation of the Eternal" on the soul of a believer; and yet there are Protestant writers who either do not themselves realise the Godhead, or think Catholics incapable of doing so—God, who is without beginning and without end, who is Being itself, who alone properly is "I am who am," immense, incomprehensible, infinite; incomprehensible even to the highest angels—the Lord God, in whose presence St. John fell as one dead, and with whom when Moses had been, his face shone so that the people could not converse with him till he had veiled it.

No one ever realised this presence of God, and the spirit in which He should be approached as the Blessed Virgin did, when in the Magnificat she called herself "the handmaid of the Lord, who had had regard to her humility, whom her soul magnified and in whom her spirit rejoiced." Protestants seem not to know, or to forget, the sublime nature of the worship Catholics offer to God—Catholics never do. The Sacrifice of the Mass alone would prevent them from forgetting. They know that on their altars, "from the rising to the setting of the sun there is a new and clean oblation," from which the incense of their adoration is ever ascending. They realise that on those altars the acceptable worship of the Everlasting never ceases. They know that in their churches that hymn of adoration, of praise, and of thanksgiving, the Gloria in Excelsis, is ever being offered up, in which they

prostrate themselves before their Heavenly Father in saying : " Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te ; gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus." They remember that in the Sanctus, that most sublime of prayers, they implore that their voices may be allowed to mingle with those of the heavenly hosts prostrate before Him : " Laudant angeli, adorant dominationes, tremunt potestates, cœli, cœlorumque virtutes ac beatæ seraphim . . . cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas, deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes." " Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus—Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, the Heavens and the earth are filled with Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest."

This distinction is ever present to Catholics ; they remember, however, that the Almighty Himself honoured and exalted His great servants and instruments, Abraham, Moses, and Elias, and John the Baptist—John the Baptist, of whom He declared "that a greater had not arisen among the sons of men—a prophet and more than a prophet." Are Catholics, then, to be told that they are not to be allowed to honour the holiest of His creatures—the Virgin Mother of God ?

The life of the Blessed Virgin, hidden and beautiful, was, like the pearl and jewel it was, concealed from men, and was known only to her Creator, from whom her beautiful soul emanated, created after His own image and

likeness (a likeness and a sinlessness which she alone never lost) — that soul whose spiritual beauty was His Masterpiece, to fit her to be the Mother of His Son. How can Catholics help thinking of her—help admiring and loving her. If Protestants would only allow themselves, they could not help it either, could not escape her influence, in this resembling that Huguenot who once being present at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament declared "If I could only believe—believe in the Real Presence, I could stay here for ever." In the lives of ordinary mortals time is apt to rust, and the soil and stress of the world is apt to tarnish, but the Blessed Virgin's beautiful soul grew more and more beautiful, until at last it was prepared to put on its immortality, to reach the mountain of God, and to be withdrawn to the Beatific Vision. If the face of Moses shone when he had been in the Presence, what a light must have shone on the seraph face of her who, the archangel declared, was ever with her God.

The following tribute to the influence of the devotion to the Mother of God occurs in Ruskin's "Fors Clavigera": "Of the sentiments which in all ages have distinguished the gentleman from the churl, the first is that of reverence for womanhood, which, even through all the cruelties of the Middle Ages, developed itself with increasing power until the thirteenth century, and became consummated in the imagination of the Madonna, which ruled over all the highest arts and purest thoughts of that age.

To the common Protestant mind the dignities ascribed to the Madonna have always been a violent offence, they are one of the parts of the Catholic faith which are open to reasonable dispute and least comprehensible by the average realistic and materialistic temper of the Reformation. But after the most careful examination, neither as adversary nor friend, of the influence of Catholicity for good and evil, I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of the noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character.

"There has probably not been an innocent cottage home throughout the length and breadth of Europe during the whole period of vital Christianity, in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties, and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women; and every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts and strength of manhood has been the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Israelite maiden, 'He that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is His Name.'"

Gerald Griffin, too, had said, much in the spirit of Ruskin, "This sweet and distinguishing devotion in the Christian Church has everywhere wrought its wonders, nor has its healing influence been felt alone in matters of eternal import. In the very bosom of civilisation it has exercised its most extensive power, and conferred its dearest benefits. Before the light of Christian dispensation broke upon the world, what was

the condition of woman in the social order? The especial mark of man's transmitted miseries, as she had been the original cause of his transgression. Amongst the Greeks, in their most vaunted era of refinement, the mothers, daughters, and sisters of the hero, the orator, the artist, or the philosopher, were consigned to ignorance and the mere drudgery of the household. A few exceptions amongst the Romans are not sufficient to prove them exempt from the same injustice. Christianity, which held forth an humble Virgin to the admiration of the world, as the chosen instrument of man's restoration, reinstated his earthly helpmate in her primeval dignity."

As Ruskin points out, "to the common Protestant mind the dignities ascribed to the Madonna have always been a violent offence," but the extraordinary thing is that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin is the one of all others often the most difficult to women, even to women who have accepted all other Catholic doctrines, and yet, as we see, it is the life of woman that the reverence for the Blessed Virgin has directly affected.

If the Catholic Church had done nothing else for civilisation, she could point triumphantly to her influence exerted systematically in this holiest of causes, and to the fact that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been, as Ruskin pointed out, "her most powerful instrument." What is now the attitude of English opinion to the Blessed Virgin? No doubt

changed for the better, but still so different from what it once was. All can see what a vivid contrast in this respect the England of the past, which for a thousand years was in communion with the rest of Christendom, presents to the England of to-day. Englishmen will hardly believe it, and yet in England the Blessed Virgin was perhaps more honoured than in any other country in the world. So much so that England was called our Lady's Dowry ; her shrines, like Walsingham, were the talk of Europe, and her altars and chapels were in every shire. As showing the devotion to her of their fathers, and how much it was in their thoughts, we have the singular circumstance that England, now Protestant, is perhaps the only country in the world where in all legal, official, and commercial documents, March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, is still called Lady Day. There can be little doubt the name was originally given lovingly. It is a strange survival of the ancient faith. To bring back before the mind's eye the England of pre-Reformation times, the England called our Lady's Dowry—to realise it as Chaucer helps us to realise the Canterbury pilgrims—is a vain task. To witness anything like it we must go to Italy. There the Italian "Canterbury Pilgrimages," or rather pilgrimages to our Lady like that at Canterbury to the shrine of St. Thomas, still exist and flourish—the shrines elsewhere destroyed are still there. In the north of Italy in particular we can see the

devotion in actual operation just as it has existed from time immemorial, and whatever the world may think, with something in it of innocence, of beauty and of holiness—the banners, the music, the guilds, the groups of earnest men and devout women, the glad faces of the people and of the children. All this has so completely passed away in England that it is hard to realise it, and yet it was once here, and in those days, in "those haunts of ancient peace," as the Poet Laureate would say, the country was called, and was, "Merrie England." In those parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire which are comparatively somewhat Catholic, the Protestant farmers still speak gently of the "old religion," as they call it, and say, "It was the first and it will be the last." Amongst the Italians the Blessed Virgin was never long absent from their thoughts; this is shown from end to end of that beautiful land. The sanctuary of Nostra Signora di Misericordia, about five miles from Savona, is a celebrated place of pilgrimage, and is well worthy of a visit, being embosomed in the mountains. Marino and Chiabrera in poetry, and Bernardo Castello in painting, vied with each other in exercising their talents in honour of this sanctuary. In Italy the very hills were named after the Blessed Virgin, especially where there was an enchanting prospect, as at Sestri. Murray tells us: "Behind Sestri rises the hill of La Madonna del Gazo, crowned by a chapel with a colossal statue of the Virgin. From this point

in every direction the view is magnificent. Rapallo, in the Riviera di Levante, is celebrated for a festival in honour of the Madonna, which continues during the first three days of July. The processions last throughout the whole night; the illuminations extend not only through the town, but along the coast for a distance of three or four miles, the lamps being hung upon stakes fixed into the sands. At Monterosso, in the Gulf of Spezia, is the sanctuary of the Madonna di Soviore. The rock upon which it stands commands a most extensive prospect, reaching to the island of Corsica. The annual Feast of the Blessed Virgin, held on August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, and on the following day, is attended by vast numbers from the adjoining ports. At Varese, near Milan, the great object of attraction is the sanctuary called La Madonna del Monte, which is situated on a lofty hill, about five miles to the north-west of the city. It is said to have been founded in A.D. 397 by St. Ambrose. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and her statue, which was consecrated by St. Ambrose, is still preserved. At the end of the sixteenth century, Aggagiari, a Capuchin friar, built out of funds raised by his exertions, the fifteen chapels which stand by the side of the road which leads to the church on the summit. The walk up is easy. The entrance to the road is through a triumphal arch. The fifteen chapels represent the mysteries of the Rosary; the first five the

joyful mysteries, the second five the sorrowful mysteries, and the last five the glorious mysteries. They contain coloured statues. Over the fountain, near the last chapel, is a fine colossal statue of Moses, by Gaetano Monti. Those who are not tempted from sacred motives may be induced to visit the Sanctuario by being told that the ascent to it affords the most magnificent views of the rich plain of Lombardy as far as the Appenines, of the higher and lower chains of the Alps, and the lakes of Varese, Comabbio, Biandrone, Monate, Maggiore, and Como." What ideas of religion and of beauty they had centuries ago, and how they loved to combine them, so that the hearts of His creatures might be raised to their Creator. Again, to quote from Murray: "One of the towers of the port of Savona is decorated by a colossal statue of the Blessed Virgin, beneath which, in large characters, is engraved the following inscription, which may be read either in Latin or Italian:

> 'In mare irato, in subita procella
> Invoco te, nostra benigna Stella.'

These lines have been attributed to Chiabrera, but they are part of a popular hymn sung by the sailors and fishermen on this coast. In the Strada degli Orifici (Goldsmiths' Street), there is a consummate work of art, which has, too, an historical interest of its own. The street is filled with shops of the trade of the goldsmiths. Before the revolution they formed a guild or

company, possessing many privileges and possessions, all of which are lost. One relic they yet preserve—a picture of the Holy Family, with the addition of St. Eloy, the patron saint of the smiths' craft, whether in gold, silver, or iron. It is upon stone, a tablet framed and glazed, in the middle of the Goldsmiths' Street, and surmounted by a wrought canopy. This picture, attributed to Pelligrino Piola, is of a deep and harmonious colour, and beautifully drawn. Piola died at the early age of twenty-two, and the extraordinary rarity and excellence of his paintings render them peculiarly prized. It is impossible, says Lanzi, to define the style of the artist so early cut off; he was yet only a student, and a student employed in imitating the best models, preferring those which had most grace. He tried several manners, and worked in all of them with surpassing taste and care. When Napoleon was in Genoa, he desired much to remove this picture to the Louvre. "We cannot oppose you by force," said the goldsmiths, "but we will never surrender it"; and accordingly he yielded and the picture remains.

It is often made a reproach to Catholics that they treat relics of the great servants of God with reverence, although they do so simply because they were His servants, with the warrant of Scripture and the sanction and example of the Almighty Himself, as we have already seen from 2 Kings, of the Protestant version, where we read: "Some that were

burying a man . . . cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus (Elisha) and when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life and stood upon his feet" (xiii. 21). The church of St. Eustorgis, in Milan, is one of the oldest in that city, having been dedicated in the fourth century, A.D. 320, by Archbishop Eustorgius, who is said to have deposited in it the bodies of the three Magi, presented to him by the Emperor Constantine. The church is one of the few remains of ancient Milan which escaped destruction from Barbarossa. Those inclined to mock at relics will see from this that the Early Christians and the first Christian Emperor did not mock, but on the contrary treated with veneration remains which they believed the Christians of the first century had reverently preserved, because the kings were associated with our Lord and were the chosen instruments of the signs and wonders of His coming.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable proofs of the love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin of Italy, the country of which Longfellow has written,

> This is, indeed, the Blessed Mary's land—
> Virgin and Mother of our dear Redeemer,

is that they have called the little village or town of "Le Grazie," or "The Favours," to show their gratitude to her. Again Murray's account is given: "Here is the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, consecrated in 1406, and built by

Francisco Gonzaga, Lord of Mantua, the sanctuary of a venerated painting of the Blessed Virgin. There had previously been a small chapel situated on the bank of the adjoining marshy lake, frequented chiefly by the boatmen of the lake. But in 1399 Gonzaga, kneeling before the painting, prayed that the Virgin would intercede for the deliverance of Mantua from the pestilence which then desolated Italy, and the result was the erection of this church, together with the now suppressed monastery, of which a small portion only now remains, tenanted by the two chaplains, by whom divine service is performed. The architecture is good Italian Gothic." In the church are a number of busts representing individuals who had sought the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and who had reason to believe, like the Prince of Mantua, when the plague was stayed, and like the people of Oberammergau centuries later, that their prayers were heard. Their gratitude is commemorated in the verses beneath. Murray's description is: "Here may be seen busts of the Emperor Charles V, Frederigo Gonzaga, Pope Pius II, the Connétable de Bourbon, and a host of other celebrities. Others represent the trials and perils from which the suppliants have been delivered, torture, anguish, danger of death. All testify their gratitude to the Virgin for the help they have obtained through her intercession." Whatever Protestants may think of these things, the plague of Mantua and its sudden cessation after public prayers were

offered up are alike historical. It will be said, too, that the people who fancied themselves cured of different bodily and mental ailments were all deluded. Charles V, who was one of the strongest - minded and ablest men of his time, and who was one of those relieved and cured, evidently did not think so.

CHAPTER VII.

In the great paintings of the five famous schools of Italian art—those of Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, and Rome—the very subjects of their paintings show the tremendous hold religion and their devotion to the Blessed Virgin had on the old masters. They never wearied painting different incidents of her life; indeed, as will be seen, Giotto, in his magnificent series, virtually gives us a history of that life. There is, perhaps, not one of the great Italian painters who has not laid an offering of his genius and devotion at Our Lady's feet.

There are a few paintings which require a more detailed description, either because the work referred to is a *chef-d'œuvre* of the artist, or on account of some circumstances connected with it which give it a special interest, and to these a brief reference will now be made. Again that reference is from Murray: "In the Palazzo Brignole, Genoa, is Guercino's Madonna, Infant Christ, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Bartholomew—a fine picture of Guercino's richest colouring; in the Archbishop's palace at Milan, Campi's Madonna, supported by angels, and a lovely sketch of Leonardo da Vinci's the Virgin contemplating our Lord, who is holding a lamb. In the Brera, Milan, is a work of Giovanni Sanzio, father to

Raphael, "The Annunciation," a remarkable picture. It has much of that grace and delicacy which the son afterwards manifested so largely. In the Brera is Raphael's "Sposalizio," or Marriage of the Virgin. This celebrated picture was originally at Citta di Castello. It is in the artist's early style and bears much resemblance to that of Perugino in the architectural perspective, arrangement of the figures, and a certain degree of hardness in the outline. Yet the design and action are very graceful, and it is a most interesting specimen of Raphael's early work bearing his name and the date, Raphael Urbinus, MDIIII, on the frieze of the circular temple in the background. Mary and Joseph stand opposite to each other in the centre, the high priest between them joins their hands; Joseph is in the act of placing the ring on the finger of the bride; behind Mary is a group of the Virgins of the Temple; near Joseph are the suitors, all portraits, one of whom breaks his barren wand—that which Joseph holds in his hand has blossomed into a flower, which, according to the legend, was the sign that he was the chosen one. This lovely painting has been recently much improved by removing the old varnish; many fine details, both of design and colouring, concealed by years of neglect, have been brought out, some of which escaped Longhi in his celebrated engraving of it, especially the delicate landscape in the background, which may also have been a little over-restored.

In the Cathedral of Cremona there is a painting which has a pathetic history, and which shows the undying love of the Italian painters for the Virgin Mother. The painting over the high altar is the last work of Gatti (il Sojaro), "The Assumption of the Virgin." It is said that, being rendered infirm by age, he added the last touches to the painting with his left hand. It was unfinished at the time of his death, and was completed by Sommachino, of Bologna.

The Church of St. Alessandre, Brescia, an ancient foundation, belonging to the Order of the Servites, is remarkable for a fine painting of the Annunciation, by Fra Angelico da Fiesole, painted in 1432, as appears from the books of the Monastery, in which it is stated that the painter received nine ducats for his labour and eleven for the gold-leaf employed on it. The predella of the life of the Virgin, in five compartments beneath, is supposed not to be by the same master.

In the Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, also in Brescia, is a masterpiece. The picture behind the high altar, by Titian, consists of five distinct subjects, but united into one composition, and executed when the artist was in the full vigour of his powers. The Annunciation forms the subject of the first and second pictures above. Titian has signed it "Titianus faciebat, MDXXII." Another very fine painting, in the same church, is the Coronation of the Virgin, by Il Moretto; it is in the second chapel, on the

left, our Lord in the clouds crowning the Virgin above, with St. Michael the Archangel, St. Joseph, St. Nicholas, and St. Francis below; the whole picture is beautifully harmonious in light and colour; the head of St. Nicholas is perfectly angelic.

There is a church in Verona, of interest to Englishmen because dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, San Tomaso Cantuariense. It is in the island of the Adige. Tebaldo, a bishop of Verona, chose Thomas à Becket for the patron of this church in 1316. The front is of the fifteenth century, partly from the designs of Sanmicheli; had these been followed the church would have been one of the finest of his productions. The principal doorway is very fine. Here is the tomb of Giovano Battista Beket Fabriano, who was of the family of the archbishop, descended from a relative who followed him into exile. The high altar-piece, by Brusasorzi, is the Virgin with St. Thomas and St. Catharine. In the sacristy is a fine painting, which has been ascribed either to Caroto or to Garofalo. It represents the Infant Saviour and St. John playing before the Virgin. The foreground is rich in flowers, the pink or garofalino being conspicuous amongstthem.

All Padua would seem to be dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and is of intense interest to a Catholic. The evidences of the devotion to her meet one everywhere, and in the churches are conspicuous. Murray says: "The church of St. Antonio is remarkable for the splendour and

beauty of its internal decorations. On the opposite side of the church is the chapel of St. Felix. It is separated from the body of the church by a range of Gothic arches in red Veronese marble, above which rises a species of entablature of coloured marbles disposed in fish-scales form. The wall, lunettes above, and vaulting are covered with excellent early frescoes by Jacopo Avanzi and Altichieri da Zevio (1376). The first seven are considered to be by Altichieri. In the centre one the subject is the Crucifixion. To the right of this the soldiers are casting lots for the garments of Christ. The skill displayed in this composition seems almost in advance of the time (about 1376) of the painter. To the left of the Crucifixion is the crowd following Jesus from the city : one group is beautiful ; it represents a woman supporting the fainting figure of the Virgin Mother, followed by another who is leading along her own infant son. In the spandrels to the extreme right and left of the five lower arches the Annunciation is painted. The Angel Gabriel occupies the spandrel to the extreme left and the Virgin that to the extreme right. The head of the Virgin is very beautiful."

In his admirable work on North Italy, Murray —from which it is here acknowledged nearly all the details about paintings have been adapted— tells us, "that about 1306 the chapel of the Annunziata, Padua, commonly called Santa Maria dell' Arena, with which the name of

Giotto is inseparably connected, was built by Enrico Scrovegno. At this period (1306) Giotto, then young, was working at Padua, and Scrovegno employed him not only to build but to decorate the edifice. The chapel consists of a single aisle with a tribune at its extremity in a simple Gothic style. The unity of design apparent in the chapel and in the paintings no doubt resulted from both being designed by the same mind ; and what adds to their interest is that Dante lodged with Giotto when the works were in progress. Of all the existing productions of Giotto, none are so perfect and genuine or so truly exemplify the character and beauties of his style. Let those who have so far cultivated a love and knowledge of art as to appreciate its high capabilities most carefully study these frescoes of Giotto. They will there find sacred history illustrated with a dignified as well as touching simplicity, eminently befitting the Divine theme. No artist of any period has been more successful than Giotto in telling his story in a striking and intelligible manner. The general series is distributed into three ranges, of which the uppermost, on the right hand, contains scenes from the life of the Virgin —the Birth of the Virgin ; the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple ; the priests having declared that the marriageable men of the House of David should bring their rods to the Temple, and that whosesoever rod should bud was to become the husband of Mary, they come, each man bringing his rod ; the Watching

of the Rods; the Marriage of Joseph and Mary (the Virgin and the other female figures are graceful); the Procession after the Marriage (this, perhaps the most beautiful painting in the series, has suffered by damp); the Annunciation, over the chancel arch, in two divisions (here the grace which Giotto imparts to his female figures is peculiarly discernible).

"The tribune, or choir, is painted with the history of the Virgin, by some supposed to be by Taddeo di Bartolo, of Sienna, but, from their close approach to Giotto's own style, with more likelihood by his pupil, Taddeo Gaddi. Be this as it may, they are much inferior to those of Giotto. They represent: (1) the visit of the Virgin to St. Elizabeth; (2) the pact between the Devil and Judas; (3) the Virgin announcing her death to St. John; (4) her death; (5) the Obsequies of the Virgin; (6) her Ascent to Heaven; and (7) her Coronation."

Venice, Titian's own city, vied with Padua in honouring the Blessed Virgin. Perhaps no city, not even Rome itself, formerly possessed so many glorious temples in proportion to its population. The very names, too, of the churches show the devotion of the people to the Blessed Virgin—La Chiesa de la Vergine del Carmelo, the Church of the Virgin of Mount Carmel, with its lovely "Presentation in the Temple" by Tintoretto; the Frari or Santa Maria Gloriosa de Frari. It was in this church, Murray tells us, that "Charles V intended to erect a tomb over the remains of Titian, but it

was reserved for the Emperor Ferdinand I to do so. On the right hand on entering the church is the colossal monument completed at the Austrian Emperor's expense. The monument, which was uncovered in 1853, consists of a massive basement on which rises a highly-decorated Corinthian canopy, under which is a sitting statue of the painter crowned with laurel, and behind, bas-reliefs copied from his three greatest works—the Assumption of the Virgin, the Death of St. Peter, Martyr, and the Martyrdom of St. Laurence. The marble slab with the verses:

> Qui giace il gran Tiziano de' Vecelli,
> Emulator de Zeusi e degli Apelli,

which for centuries was the only memorial on the artist's grave, still may be seen on the right of the present magnificent mausoleum. Of the other churches dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, there may be mentioned La Madonna dell' Orto, Santa Maria della Misericordia, Santa Maria Formosa, and the Church of the Madonna dei Miracoli. Titian lived near this church. In the church of La Madonna dell' Orto are a number of Tintoretto's finest paintings, and he was buried in it according to his dying request. The church of Santa Maria della Salute is of exceptional interest, as it was founded pursuant to a decree of the Senate in 1631, as a monument of thanksgiving after the cessation of the great pestilence, in which 60,000 of the inhabitants are said to have died. It is a great octagonal church, out of which opens a

deep recess, forming the Lady Chapel and choir, erected under the direction of Baldassare Longhena. The interior is splendidly decorated and contains many fine works of art. In the three first chapels on the right a series of paintings, by Luca Giordano, of the Presentation in the Temple, the Assumption, and the Nativity of the Virgin. Over the altar is the Madonna della Salute, by Il Padovanino, and on the side wall of the sacristy, Tintoretto's Marriage of Cana. In the church itself, in the third chapel on the left, is Titian's fine picture of the Descent of the Holy Ghost. In connection with the painting of the Annunciation in the church of San Salvatore, by this immortal artist when in his extreme old age, a pathetic incident is told. It was painted by him when nearly 90 years of age, and on the margin of the painting he wrote 'Titianus fecit, fecit,' in order to silence the critic who asserted that no one would believe that it was painted by him. Like so many other of the Italian painters, even when his hand had lost its cunning, his heart was offering its last homage to the Virgin Mother of God."

To resume Murray's description: "In the church of Gli Scalzi, built in 1680, which is the pride of the Venetians for its richness, and which abounds in rare and rich marbles, statues, bas-reliefs and gilding, the principal treasure is the beautiful picture behind the high altar—a Madonna and Child, by Giovanni Bellini.

"The church of San Sisto Piacenza formerly

contained over the high altar Raphael's celebrated Madonna di San Sisto, now in the gallery at Dresden, which, in 1754, the monks sold to the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, Frederick Augustus III, for 12,000 sequins.

"The Benedictine church, attached to the monastery of that Order in Parma, of St. John the Evangelist, dating from the tenth century, contains frescoes of great interest on the cupola by Correggio, representing a vision of St. John. He, in extreme old age and the last surviving Apostle, beholds, in a moment of ecstasy, his companions in heaven, who form a circle around their Divine Master resplendent in glory. The saint is alone upon the earth, and is depicted below all the others at the extreme edge of the cupola. He kneels upon a rock, his arms leaning upon a book, which is supported by a number of boys, of whom the very clouds are full. Each of the four pendentives has on it an Evangelist with a doctor of the church, viz.: St. John with St. Augustine; St. Matthew with St. Jerome; St. Mark with St. Gregory; St. Luke with St. Ambrose, all seated in various attitudes upon clouds and supported by graceful children. In the same church, also, are a small fresco of St. John writing his gospel, and a lovely painting of the Virgin and St. Joseph adoring the Infant Saviour, by G. Francia; the figure of the Virgin is especially good, as is one of the shepherds stretching forth both arms as he hears the song of the angels."

Those who reject all miracles of course reject the tradition that St. John, to whose care the Blessed Virgin was confided by our Saviour was miraculously preserved when thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and yet in rejecting the tradition known and believed all over the East, they must accept what is in itself almost a miracle, that he alone of all the Apostles was not martyred.

The account given of Parma is of great interest :—

"The Oval Hall, Parma, contains some *chefs-d'œuvre*, with the Blessed Virgin for their subject : the San Vitale Madonna, and the Deposition, by F. Francia. The first, a lovely picture, represents the Virgin and Child seated on a throne, with SS. Benedict, Placidus, Justina, and Scholastica on either side, with the infant St. John in the foreground ; it is dated 1515, and long belonged to the San Vitale family. The Deposition represents the dead Saviour on the knees of the Virgin, surrounded by saints. Among the other remarkable works here are Carracci's the Virgin Carried to the Tomb, and the latter found empty by the Apostles, and a Madonna and Child, by Guercino. In the hall, called the Hall of the Madonna della Scodella, is Correggio's Flight into Egypt, deriving its name from the Scodella, the small dish or bowl which the Virgin holds in her hand, the armorial bearings of the Scutellari, or Scodellaris, for one of whom it was painted. Vasari calls this picture 'divine.' In

the Hall of the St. Jerome, hung like that of the Scodella, in green silk, is the celebrated picture called the St. Jerome, and it is the only one in the hall. It bears the name of St. Jerome in consequence of his being the most remarkable figure in the group, of which the centre is formed by the Madonna and Child. St. Mary Magdalene is opposite to St. Jerome, kissing the feet of the Infant. The history of this fine painting is curious. It was ordered by a widow lady, Briseis Bergonzi, who, in her contract with Correggio, made her stipulations as to what she was to have for her money with the utmost minuteness. The price was 47 sequins—about £22. Correggio was employed during six months in the widow's house painting the picture, and when it was finished she was so well satisfied with it that she gave him, besides his board, two cartloads of faggots and a quantity of wheat. The widow bestowed the painting upon the Convent of St. Anthony, at Parma, in 1527; and it speedily acquired an European reputation, so much so that Don John V, of Portugal, in 1549, opened a negotiation with the convent for the purchase of the painting, offering, as it is said, as much as 460,000 francs, a sum which appears incredible. The magistrates of Parma, hearing of the intended contract, and fearing lest their city should lose its treasure, gave notice to the duke, and he stopped the bargain by removing the picture and placing it in the cathedral. Here it continued till 1756, when the infant

Don Philip removed it to his newly-founded academy. It was one of the earliest works of art carried off by the French. The Virgin is lovely; gentleness and entire devotion reign throughout her figure; the colouring is exquisite. The angel next to St. Jerome is extremely beautiful."—Kugler.

The Italian writers upon art often call this picture "Il Giorno," from the wonderful effect of bright daylight which it exhibits, thus placing it in contrast with his celebrated Notte, above which it is placed by Mengs, who considered it as the finest of Correggio's works.

In Ferrara, in the cathedral, is Francia's beautiful Coronation of the Virgin, and in the Church of St. Dominick are two fine paintings of Garofalo, the Virgin and Child, with St. John and St. Jerome, a charming picture, and a beautiful Holy Family. A favourite subject with the painters of the school of Ferrara was "The Flight out of Egypt."

There is a very pretty town between Ferrara and Bologna, called Cento, the chief interest of which arises from its being the birthplace of Guercino. The church contains several works of this great artist, and his house, which it was his delight to cover with his paintings, is still preserved without any alteration, save what has been produced by time. The Casa di Guercino has been correctly termed a domestic museum. In the little chapel is an admirable picture of "Two Pilgrims Praying to the Virgin." This great artist, really born a painter—the magician

of painting as he has been surnamed—was also a pious, moderate, disinterested and charitable man. The house of Guercino is not devoid of magnificence; it is easy to conceive that he might there receive and regale "ad un squisito banchetto" those two cardinals who had come to the fair, when his most distinguished pupils served at table. Christina of Sweden also visited Guercino at Cento, and after admiring his works, that queen wished to touch the hand which had produced such *chefs-d'œuvre.* The Chiesa del Rosario is full of his paintings. He is said to have given the design of the front and steeple and to have worked at the statue of the Virgin. He is consequently to be seen there as a painter, sculptor, and architect, but especially as a Christian. A chapel founded by him bears his name; he bequeathed a legacy for the celebration of mass there, and left a gold chain, of great value, to be placed on the statue of the Virgin of the Rosary. Not far from Cento is another small town, Pieve di Cento, in the church of which is a noble picture, an Assumption, by Guido. In Bologna the most celebrated name in the early history of the school is that of Francisco Francia, and of him and his work Raphael says, "that he had seen no Madonnas better designed, more beautiful, or characterised by a greater appearance of devotion, than those of Francia." This judgment of Raphael's shows the spirit in which he thought the subject should be approached. The greatest names of this glorious school of Bologna,

the Caraccis and their pupil Domenichino, considered by Poussin as the greatest painter after Raphael, as also Guido and Albani, all laid the tribute of their genius and devotion at our Lady's feet. The grand painting in hall five of the picture gallery of Bologna is Guido's celebrated Madonna della Pieta, so called from the Virgin weeping over the dead body of our Saviour, which forms the upper half of this large and very fine picture; below stand the five saints, protectors of Bologna—Petronius, Carlo Borromeo, Dominick, Francis and Proculus; and in the background, a bird's-eye view of the city, with its towers, etc. This celebrated painting was executed in 1616 for the municipality, who were so pleased with it, that, in addition to the price agreed upon, they bestowed a gold chain and a medal of gratitude on the artist. In the same hall is Guido's St. Bruno praying in the desert with the Virgin in glory above. In room six is Francia's Madonna and Child between SS. Michael, John the Baptist, Stephen and St. Augustin, with an angel bearing a lily. This has always been looked upon as one of Francia's finest paintings. In room seven is Domenichino's Virgin of the Rosary, with St. Dominick and angels carrying its emblems, as also Annibale Caracci's the Virgin and Infant Jesus in glory above, with saints below, together with Lodovico Caracci's fine series representing the Madonna and Child with four saints. There is a touching story of Lodovico Caracci. In the duomo or cathedral

on the arch above the high altar, is the celebrated painting of the Annunciation, his last work. The foot of the angel bending before the Virgin was a little crooked, and it is related that, when the aged artist made the discovery, he offered to defray the expense of re-erecting the scaffold in order that he might retouch it, but the request was refused, and Lodovico died of grief a few days after. In the duomo, also, there is an Annunciation significantly called "del' bell' Angelo," a beautiful and expressive work by Albano; and in the church of St. Benedict, the Virgin holding the crown of thorns, and conversing with the Magdalen on her Son's death, an expressive work of Tiarini. In the church of St. Dominick the fresco on the vault above the altar, representing the glory of Paradise, with the Saviour and the Virgin receiving the soul of the saint into Paradise amidst a host of angels, is one of the finest compositions by Guido. "In the highest circle of the dome a soft radiance, emanating from the Holy Spirit, illuminates the picture, touching with partial lights the heads of our Saviour, of Mary, and the saint, who are placed at equal distances, while a choir of angels exquisitely designed, and finely coloured, fills the space below."—Bell. The church of St. Leonard contains in its first chapel the Annunciation by Tiarini, in which God the Father, holding a dove as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, is represented as awaiting the answer of the Virgin to the announcement of the angel; and like so

many other of the Italian painters, Tiarini's last work had her for its subject—the Nativity of the Virgin, in the church of the Servites. The church of San Stefano is the most ancient ecclesiastical edifice in Bologna and one of the oldest in Italy. Here, again, evidence of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, nearly a century before Christianity was even introduced into England, and three centuries before its introduction into Germany, meets us. The church, which is quite a labyrinth, is formed by the union of seven churches, and by descending into the seventh a kind of crypt is reached, remarkable for its ancient columns with bas-reliefs, and as containing the bodies of two native saints and martyrs, Vitalis and Agricola. The Madonna in the wall was placed here in 488 A.D. by St. Giocondo, bishop of the diocese.

Ravenna, of all the cities of Italy, is, perhaps, the one fullest of interest, whether to the Christian or the antiquarian, in this respect, as Cardinal Wiseman says, hardly yielding to Rome itself; and of one of its churches, as we have seen, Hallam, referring to the mosaics in the church of St. Apollinare Nuovo, executed about 570 A.D., wrote: "This superb mosaic (of the Nativity), the finest in the whole of Ravenna, leads to the conclusion that this great corruption of Christianity (the devotion to the Blessed Virgin) was established in the Church before the end of the sixth century." In a passage already quoted above St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the devotion in his time,

that is two centuries before the date fixed by Hallam.

The half deserted streets of Ravenna are filled with Christian antiquities which have undergone scarcely any change since the time of Justinian, and Murray adds: "As the traveller wanders through them, their solitude recalls the feelings with which he may have ridden round the walls of Constantinople, but Ravenna has preserved more memorials of her Imperial masters, and possesses a far higher interest for the Christian antiquary, than even that celebrated seat of Empire." Wiseman writes: "Whoever loves Early Christian monuments, whoever desires to see them in greater perfection than the lapse of fourteen centuries could warrant us in expecting, whoever desires to study them unaided by the remains of heathen antiquity, should make every effort to spend some days at least in this noble and imperial city. From Rome it differs mainly in this—that your meditations on its ornaments are not disturbed by the constant recurrence of pagan remains, nor your researches perplexed by the necessity of inquiring what was built and what was borrowed by the faithful. Ravenna has only one antiquity, and that is Christian." On the decline of the Roman Empire, Honorius chose Ravenna as the capital of the Western Empire, and it was to the sister of Honorius, the Empress Galla Placidia during the minority of her son Valentinian, that much of its magnificence was due. The Basilica of St. Giovanni

Evangelista was founded by her in 414, in fulfilment of a vow made in a tempest during the voyage from Constantinople to Ravenna with her children; and in her mausoleum, called also the church of SS. Nazario e Celso, its rich marbles, its mosaics and high altar of Oriental alabaster, still attest its ancient splendour. About two miles from the city is the Gothic church of Sta. Maria in Porto Fuori, built towards the end of the eleventh century by the Beato Pietro Onesti, called Il Peccatore in fulfilment of a vow to the Virgin made during a storm at sea. The chief interest of this church arises from its frescoes in the choir, attributed to Giotto, the Nativity, Presentation, the Death, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin. No traveller should leave Ravenna without seeing the magnificent Basilica of St. Apollinare in Classe, which is a purer specimen of Christian art than any which can be found even in Rome. The walls of the nave, and part of those of the aisles, are decorated with a chronological series of portraits of the Bishops and Archbishops of Ravenna, beginning with St. Apollinaris of Antioch, a follower of St. Peter, who suffered martyrdom under Vespasian, A.D. 74. In the middle of the nave is a small marble altar, dedicated to the Virgin, "Martyrum Regina," by St. Maximianus, in the sixth century; beneath lay the body of St. Apollinaris, until removed to the crypt in 1173.

Cesena, near Ravenna, affords striking evidence that the devotion to the Blessed

Virgin goes back to the first ages of Christianity. Cesena is one of the earliest episcopal sees in Italy; the first bishop was St. Philemon, A.D. 92. About a mile from Cesena, on a commanding hill, is the handsome church of the Madonna, or Santa Maria dell Monte, and on this site there has been a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin from time immemorial.

CHAPTER VIII.

It surely might arrest the attention of those who question Catholic doctrine and the identity and continuity of that doctrine that here in Italy are two episcopal sees, Ravenna and Cesena, both dating from the time of the Apostles—a thing unknown in the Reformation countries, and yet both in complete accord with the rest of the Catholic world. There was no "Reformation" or repudiation of Christian doctrine either in the sixth or the sixteenth centuries in Ravenna or Cesena, and yet their Christianity was derived from two bishops who had been in actual touch with the Apostles—from St. Apollinaris, the disciple of St. Peter at Antioch and Archbishop of Ravenna, martyred in A.D. 74, and from St. Philemon, Bishop of Cesena in A.D. 92.

Of course in Rome, which the Emperor Charles V called "Communis omnium patria," the city of the soul, the one city on earth where, as has been said, religion is made the business of life, that eternal city in which the sublime title of Vicar of Christ has been given to its Pontiffs, there, as one might expect, what may be called the presence of the Blessed Virgin, her influence over the Church and the devotion to her, is everywhere felt. In Rome they thought they could not sufficiently show their

reverence for Mary. There, as we go through the centuries, fresh and ever fresh proofs of the love and faith of Christendom, and of their devotion, grow upon us; generation vies with generation in laying its homage at the feet of the meek and lowly Virgin. In the fourth century one of the five great basilicas was dedicated to her, the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and since then a number of Rome's most magnificent churches. The church of Sta. Maria Maggiore, also called the Liberian Basilica, is the third in rank, and one of those which have a Porta Santa. According to an ancient legend it was founded near the Macellum Liviæ, on the highest summit of the Esquiline in A.D. 352, by Pope Liberius and John a Roman, in consequence of a miraculous fall of snow in the month of August, which covered the precise space occupied by their basilica. Murray's "Rome" is here quoted: "From this legend, which is represented in a bas-relief in the Borghese Chapel, the edifice was at first called St. Maria ad Nives; it afterwards took the name of St. Maria Maggiore, from being the principal of all the Roman churches dedicated to the Virgin. From the balcony in the upper portico of the great façade the Pope pronounces his benediction on the Festival of the Assumption. The interior is perhaps the finest of its class in existence; it consists of an immense nave, divided from the side aisles by two rows of Ionic columns of white marble. The length of the nave is 280 English feet,

and the breadth about 60 feet. The roof, designed by Sangallo, is flat, and divided into five rows of panels. It is elaborately carved and gilt with the first gold brought to Spain from South America, presented to Alexander VI by Ferdinand and Isabella. The mosaics on the face of the arch of the tribune are of much interest in the history of art, and represent the Annunciation, the Presentation in the Temple, the Adoration of the Magi, the Massacre of the Innocents, with the two holy cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The vault of the tribune is covered with mosaics by Jacopo da Tarita (A.D. 1295); they represent the Coronation of the Virgin and three saints on each side; the five below and between the windows are by Gaddi and represent the Purification, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Wise Men, the Presentation in the Temple, and Death of the Virgin. In the Sixtine Chapel is a subterranean chapel, and beneath the altar is the smaller one, in which is preserved the sacred culla, which forms the object of a solemn ceremony and procession on Christmas Eve. The culla consists of five boards of the manger wherein the infant Saviour was deposited at the Nativity; they are enclosed in an urn of silver and crystal, with a fine gilt figure of the Child on top. As to their history, they were brought to Rome from Bethlehem when the remains of St. Jerome were also removed, in the middle of the seventh century, by Pope Theodorus.

"The altarpiece in the Sixtine Chapel is formed of fluted columns or bands of jasper, and is celebrated for the painting of the Virgin and Child, traditionally attributed to St. Luke, and pronounced to be such in a copy of a papal bull attached to one of the walls. It is the same which St. Gregory the Great carried in procession to stay the plague that desolated Rome in A.D. 590.

"The pavement of Sta. Maria Maggiore is very beautiful, consisting of alternate compartments of mosaic work and marble. The ceremonies in this basilica during the year are of a very imposing kind. At the Feast of Pentecost the Pope celebrates High Mass here, unless it takes place in the Sixtine Chapel. On the Festival of the Assumption, August 15th, High Mass is always celebrated by the Cardinal Archpriest of the Basilica, in presence of the Pope, who afterwards pronounces from the balcony his benediction on the people.

"In front of the basilica is one of the most beautiful Corinthian columns in Rome, called the Colonna della Vergine. It is of white marble, and is the only one which has been preserved to attest the magnificence of the Basilica of Constantine, although it probably belonged to an edifice of an earlier period, possibly to the Temple of Peace, founded by Vespasian. On the summit is a bronze statue of the Virgin standing on the half-moon, by Bertelot."

In St. Peter's the same reverence and love

for our Blessed Lady meets us at the very entrance. Murray says: "The bronze doors of the central one, which are only opened on great occasions, belonged to the old basilica, and were executed in the fifteenth century, by Antonio Filarete, and Simone, brother of Donatello. The bas-reliefs of the compartments represent our Saviour and the Virgin above, SS. Peter and Paul delivering the keys to Eugenius IV, and below the martyrdoms of St. Peter and St. Paul." In the Capella del Coro, the mosaic altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception is a copy of the picture by Pietro Bianchi, now in Michel Angelo's beautiful Church of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, and in the Chapel of the Presentazione there is a mosaic copy of the Presentation of the Virgin, by Romanelli. In the north side aisle is the Capella dellà Pietà, from the celebrated Pietà, by Michel Angelo (already described), the marble group representing the Virgin with the body of the dead Saviour on her knees. In this chapel is the unrobing room of the Pontiff. In the Chapel of the Madonna del Soccorso, erected by Gregory XIII from the designs of Michel Angelo, are deposited the remains of St. Gregory Nazianzen. The music and poetry of St. Peter's for Easter Day is the most beautiful in the whole range of sacred music. The Sequence "Victimæ Paschali" (generally to the music of Simonelli) is probably one of the earliest specimens of the ecclesiastical hymn now extant, its authorship having never been ascertained; like the magni-

ficent anthem for Christmas, "Quem Vidistis Pastores," it partakes of the dramatic, introducing as interlocutors Mary, who returns from the sepulchre, and the disciples, who question her what she has seen. It concludes with a kind of chorus, which swells into a noble strain, after a confession of faith in the resurrection.

The benediction at Easter, given formerly by the Pope from the balcony of St. Peter's, is of especial solemnity and beauty; it is also a proclamation, *urbi et orbi*, of the faith of the Catholic Church, and of the true nature of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin as our Mediatrix with her Divine Son.

The following are the words, translated into English and taken from Murray's "Rome," of the benediction, the "Amen" being four times chanted, and breaking finely upon the silence in which, unless one is very near, the whole seems to pass:—

"May the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in whose power and authority we confide, intercede for us with the Lord.—Amen. Through the prayers and merits of the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, of the blessed Michael the Archangel, of the blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all Saints, may the Omnipotent God have mercy upon you; may all your sins be remitted, and Jesus Christ lead you to eternal life.—Amen. Indulgence, absolution and remission of all your sins, space for true and faithful repentance, hearts ever contrite, and amendment of life, may the

Omnipotent and Merciful God afford you.—Amen. And may the blessing of the Omnipotent God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, descend upon you, and remain with you ever.—Amen." At the last clause, *et benedictio*, the Pope rises and makes the sign of the cross in front and on each side over the people as he pronounces the holy names; at *descendat* he stretches out his arms to heaven, and then folds them over his breast." To continue the quotation:—

"In the tribune of St. Peter's is the famous chair of St. Peter, in bronze, enclosing the one in which, according to church tradition, St. Peter and many of his successors officiated. The bronze covering was executed by Bernini in 1667. It is supported by four Fathers of the Church—SS. Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Athanasius." The comment on this extract is natural—that just as in Rome these Fathers support the chair of St. Peter, so also over the world and in its every dogma they still support it.

Murray continues: "The first church ever built in Rome, the Chiesa di Sta. Maria in Trastevere, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin at a period very close to the Apostles. It was constructed by Calextus I in 222 A.D., and was the first church publicly consecrated to divine worship in Rome. It was rebuilt by Innocent II, who decorated the façade with mosaics, which still exist. The Assumption on the roof is by Domenichino.

"The church of St. Augustine derives interest

from the fresco of Raphael, and from the painting of the Madonna della Rosa, so called from the wreaths of roses held by the angels above, in the second chapel on the right, which is a copy of the lost picture by Raphael, formerly in the church at Loreto."

The church of St. Clement, between the Coelian and Esquiline hills, was long considered one of the most ancient and unaltered of the Early Christian edifices of Rome, but to the intense delight of Christian antiquarians a still more ancient one beneath having been comparatively recently discovered; we of course find, as we might expect, evidence of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Again, to quote from Murray: "On the stucco of the wall of the right aisle are several traces of paintings, the best preserved being, in a niche, figures of the Virgin and Child, with two females, one probably St. Catherine the Martyr of Alexandria, and a large figure of Christ, in the act of giving the benediction, the head unfortunately destroyed. These paintings, it is admitted, belong to the very earliest period of Christian art, and are undoubted evidence of the faith of Christendom at the time they were produced.

"The church of Sta. Maria degli Angeli is rendered of exceptional interest by its site, its connection with Michel Angelo, and its great beauty." This magnificent church occupies the Pinacotheca, or, according to more recent opinions, the Cella Calidaria, of the Thermæ or

Baths of Diocletian, which was altered by Michel Angelo during the pontificate of Pius IV., to adapt it to Christian worship. It is one of the most imposing sacred edifices in Rome. The great hall was converted by Michel Angelo into a Greek cross by the addition of the present vestibule and of the tribune opposite. Of the sixteen columns of the church, the eight in the transept only are antique, and are of red Egyptian granite, with attached bases of white marble. In the circular vestibule are the tombs of Salvator Rosa and Carlo Maratta, both illustrious painters and devout clients of the Blessed Virgin. The church of Ara Coeli is one of the most interesting in Rome, and "is of high antiquity, probably as old as the sixth century, when it was dedicated by St. Gregory the Great as Sancta Maria in Capitolio. The name of Ara Coeli has given rise to considerable controversy: the tradition of the church tells us that it is derived from the altar erected by Augustus to commemorate the prophecy of the Cumœan Sibyl respecting the coming of our Saviour. It is said to have borne the inscription *Ara primogeniti Dei*, from which the legend has derived the modern title." Petrarch, in 1341 A.D., tells us the legend, as he heard it, of the church being on the site where Augustus beheld the vision of the Virgin Mother, the vision being afterwards interpreted by the Oracular Sibyls. It was for this church that Raphael painted the celebrated Madonna da Foligno in 1512. "This

exquisite work," says Murray, "which stood over the high altar, was removed to the Convent of the Contesse at Foligno when the sister of Sigismondo Conti, who had given the commission to Raphael, became a nun in that establishment." Murray adds, speaking of the church: "To the English traveller the church of Ara Coeli has a peculiar interest from its connection with the greatest of our historians, Gibbon." It was in it, as he himself tells us, that "on the 15th of October, 1764," as he sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to his mind.

We learn from the same authority that "Siric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who visited Rome in 990 A.D., gives us most interesting information about one of the churches dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Sta. Maria, in Cosmedin. This church is said to have been built by St. Dionysius in the third century. It was restored by Adrian I. in 782, in the form of a basilica. Being intended for the Greek exiles who were driven from the East by the Iconoclasts under Constantine Copronymus, and having a schola, or hall of meeting, attached to it for their use, it acquired from that circumstance the name of St. Maria Schola Greca, and under this name it is mentioned by the Archbishop Siric (as stated, in 990). The picture of the Virgin in the tribune is a good specimen of early art; it bears a Greek inscription, and is said to have

been brought by the Greeks when they fled from Constantinople. There is an interesting mosaic of the Virgin and St. Joseph, of the time of John VII (705), in the sacristy of this church, brought from the old basilica of St. Peter's.

"In the well-known church of St. Maria Sopra Minerva, in the Chapel of the Annunciation, there is the beautiful altarpiece of the Annunciation, on a gold ground, attributed to Fra Angelico. On the left of the high altar is the statue of Christ by Michel Angelo, one of his finest single figures. In this church is a monument, interesting to English travellers, to Cardinal Howard, Great Almoner of England, and grandson to Thomas, Earl of Arundel, who died in Rome in 1694. The most interesting monument, however, is the recumbent figure in relief of Fra Angelico da Fiesole, the celebrated painter, who died in the adjoining Dominican convent, and whose devotional works and purity of life are expressed in the inscription said to have been written by Pope Nicholas V—

NON MIHI SIT LAUDI QUOD ERAM VELUT
ALTER APELLES
SED QUOD LUCRA TUIS OMNIA,
CHRISTE, DABAM:
ALTERA NAM TERRIS OPERA EXTANT,
ALTERA COELO
URBS ME JOANNENI FLOS TULIT ETRURIÆ.

In this church on the Festival of the Annunciation, the 25th of March, the Pope attends High

Mass, and afterwards distributes dowries to the young girls portioned by the Confraternity of the Annunziata."

Two others of Raphael's paintings, described by Murray, may be mentioned—The Deposition and his St. Luke painting the Virgin and Child. "The magnificent picture of the Deposition, or Entombment of Christ, was painted by Raphael in his twenty-fourth year. It was executed by the illustrious artist after his return from Florence for the church of St. Francesco at Perugia. On one side of the composition the Saviour is borne to the sepulchre by two men, whose vehement action contrasts strongly with the lifeless body; the intensity and varied expression of grief are finely shown in the St. Peter, the St. John, and the Magdalen, who surround the corpse, while, on the other side, the Virgin, overwhelmed by her affliction, has fainted in the arms of her attendants. In the Salone de Raffaele is his St. Luke painting the portrait of the Virgin and Child on panel, a fine fragment."

The Pantheon, as we have seen, is closely associated with the Blessed Virgin, as it is also with that most fervent of her clients, Raphael. "This noblest temple of Heathenism in Rome" was, as Mr. Hemans tells us, "rescued from decay through its dedication to Christian worship." As already mentioned, it was consecrated by Pope Boniface IV about A.D. 608, and was thenceforth dedicated to "the Mother of God and the holy martyrs."

Mr. Hemans adds: "Entering this noble building, one receives an impression which is, I think, best expressed in the words of Madame de Stael: 'Quelle Serenite! Quel air de fête on remarque dans cet edifice! Les Païens ont divinisé la vie, et les Chrétiens ont divinisé la mort.'"

Mr. Hemans continues: "We must look with reverence on the tomb of Raffael Sanzio, and with interest on the altar (the one nearest to that modest grave) adorned with rich marbles by desire of that great artist, according to his last will and testament." The sculptured group erected above that, the Madonna and Child, was his gift, and of this gift Cardinal Wiseman writes: "The inscription in the Pantheon tells how the immortal Raphael had willed that no ornament should deck his tomb but that very statue of God's Mother which he had given to that church." How Raphael's mind and heart were with the Blessed Virgin is shown by this dying prayer and direction of his that his love and devotion to her should be on record. He felt whence he had drawn his inspiration in painting his Madonnas; nor was he alone in this feeling. How the Italian painters considered the great saints to have lived is shown by Guercino's painting in the church of St. Dominick, Bologna, of St. Thomas Aquinas writing on the subject of the Eucharist, with two inspiring angels and the Sacred Host above.

With the Italian painters intensity of faith

and the highest development of art went hand in hand together—they lived not only in a world of beauty but in a world of religion, of close communion with our Lord, His Blessed Mother, and His angels. Even Protestants admit the seraphic look of Raphael's Madonnas and that Fra Angelico's angels are so angelic that he must have seen them. These great artists have given us visions of exquisite beauty, but visions which have served a higher and a holier purpose, because they have raised, as they continue to raise, hearts and souls to God. The lives of these painters were as beautiful as their paintings, and their paintings were not only consummate works of art, but were often actually books of devotion from which streams of grace have flowed into many a soul. The world simply regards these men as her greatest artists, but to the Catholic they are much more. They have lifted the hearts of every generation of men to heaven and the dwellers there. Even when the same subject—as the Annunciation or the Assumption—was treated by different artists, yet each artist had his own beautiful and often holy conception, and they differed from each other as "star differs from star."

CHAPTER IX.

It will be recollected that after Giotto had erected the chapel of the Annunziata in Padua, and was painting in it those noble frescoes giving the history of the Blessed Virgin, that Dante lodged with him while the works were in progress. Whether Dante had commenced his "Divina Commedia" at this period cannot perhaps be determined; but there can be little doubt that his deeply religious spirit would be profoundly affected by the kindred spirit of Giotto, or that these master minds acted and reacted on each other in such a way that Christendom for all time has become their debtor. Gladstone, who had made Homer a life's study, knew Dante quite as well, and has repeated what was said of him in Italy in his own day, and what indeed an analysis of his wonderful poem proves, that if by any possibility the Scriptures had been lost, Dante's knowledge of them was so systematic and profound that from memory he could have reproduced the substance of both Old and New Testaments. His magnificent invocation of the Blessed Virgin which he puts into the mouth of St. Bernard, though familiar to most readers, is too sublime not to be here inserted :—

O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all :
Term by th' eternal Council pre-ordain'd
Ennobler of thy nature, so advanced
In thee, that its great Maker did not scorn
Himself in His own work enclosed to dwell.
For in thy womb rekindling shone the love
Reveal'd, whose genial influence makes now
This flow'r to germ in Eternal peace :
Hence thou to us of charity and love
Art as the noonday torch, and art beneath
To mortal men of hope a living spring.
So mighty art thou, lady, and so great,
That he who grace desireth, and comes not
To thee for aidance, fain would have desire
Fly without wings ; nor only him who asks
Thy bounty, succours, but doth freely oft
Forerun the asking ; whatsoe'r may be
Of excellence in creatures—pity mild,
Relenting mercy, large munificence
Are all combined in thee.

After reading them, the music of these lines, to borrow an expression of Landor's, dwells in the memory for days to come. When the religious spirit takes possession of the soul what an insight it gives. Faber, writing of "Mary's Predestination," says : "When we consider the Word's desire to assume a created nature, when we ponder His choice of human nature, when we reflect on His further choice of His Soul and Body, and add to all these considerations the remembrance of His immense love, we can see how His goodness would exult in the choice of His Mother, whom to love exceedingly was to become one of His chiefest, one of the greatest of all human perfections. All possible

creatures were before Him out of which to choose the creature that was to come nearest Him, the creature that was to love Him, and to have a natural right to love Him, best of all, and the creature whom duty as well as preference was to bind Him to love with the intensest love. Then, out of all He chose Mary. What more can be said? She fulfilled His idea, or rather, she did not so much suit His idea, but she was herself His idea, and His idea of her was the cause of her creation. The whole theology of Mary lies in this eternal and efficacious choice of her in the bosom of the Father." Her love of God must have been a miracle of love to explain her election—she was undoubtedly a seraph dwelling on earth. As Faber says, "the whole theology of Mary lies in this election of her by God the Father."

Her union with God must have been complete. She had, indeed, in the words of the angel, "found grace with God" before the crowning grace of being His Virgin Mother was conferred upon her. Manifestly her life had been a miracle of holiness. How had that life been spent? Without doubt in constant communion with God. No one ever praised and exalted the Lord as the Blessed Virgin did, no daughter of Israel ever rejoiced in Him who made her as she did, no one ever exulted in her King as she did; no one ever loved God as she did—not the angels, not the saints. She loved Him first as her God, then as her Son; she alone combined those two intense loves. To her alone of

created beings were those words addressed by the angel that she was "full of grace." It is impossible for us to conceive the fulness of grace poured out on the Blessed Virgin, in how absolute a sense "the Lord was with her," how "blessed she was amongst women," who, finally, was declared to be in the sight of God and His angels "blessed and full of grace"—a perfect woman who had reached "the mountain of God." The language of the archangel could not have been more full of recognition, the reverence of his salutation could not further go. All the homage, therefore all the reverence men can pay her falls immeasurably short of what she received while still on earth from "the Holy" and His angels.

Of all the just whose distinguishing characteristic it is, St. Paul tells us, that they live in the presence of God, it was given to her to live in that Presence in a way never before given to man. All the homage of Catholics, of Christians, is but a weak thing. If, as the apostle tells us, "Neither eye has seen nor ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him," if, as our Lord Himself said, "In the House of My Father there are many mansions,' then it is certain that as on earth the Blessed Virgin was incomparably near and dear to the Deity, so in heaven she is in the inner Mansion—the inner Temple of the Holy of Holies, in the most perfect enjoyment of the Beatific Vision — of the Father whose fair

daughter she was—of the Son whose Mother she was—of the Holy Ghost whose spouse she was—close to the Triune God.

The attitude of many Protestants to the Blessed Virgin is almost incomprehensible to Catholics. Why? They are Christians as well as we are—they owe her quite as much as we do—they are bound by the Scriptures to call her "Blessed," an injunction which they seldom or never obey, quite as much as we are. There are vast numbers amongst them who seem to think it possible to neglect and slight the Mother and yet love the Son. They seem to think that because they only attack the Mother and do not attack the Son they are safe. But are they? They forget that others who have begun by attacking her have ended by attacking Him—have denied His divinity as well as her maternity. They forget that against both the Mother and the Son the efforts of heresy have been simultaneously directed, so that, as we have already seen, when it became evident that the Council of Ephesus would proclaim her to be Theotókos, the Mother of God, the miserable Nestorius, who had denied her the title, was heard to exclaim in impotent rage, "As for me, I can never make up my mind to say that a child of two or three months is God, nor to adore an infant at its mother's breast." Let those who attack the Blessed Virgin beware that they be not led much further than they intend. As St. Bernard says: "Therefore, within us let the slanderous tongue be silent.

the blasphemous tongue, the tongue that boasteth great things. For it is good with this threefold silence to tarry for the Lord, so as to be able to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 Kings iii. 10). For the words of such tongues are not for Him, but against Him, even as the lawgiver said to them that murmured: "Your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord" (Exod. xvi. 8). Do warnings like these suggest no inquiry, no searchings of heart to those who think that in dishonouring the Mother they are honouring the Son?

Protestants will hardly believe anything about the Blessed Virgin. In getting away as far as they could from everything Catholic—from Catholic doctrine and Catholic practice—they have, as has been abundantly proved, separated themselves from the early Christians as well. Take the single instance of making the sign of the cross, constantly practised by the first Christians, and completely given up by Protestants. When they say, as many of them do and have done, of the Blessed Virgin what a Catholic even shrinks from quoting, that "she was no more than any other woman," they falsify the Scriptures themselves, which have declared her "blessed among women." They have invented the odious term "Mariolatry," because Catholics give what they withhold, and try by reverence and love to repair and atone for the outrages offered to the sweet Mother of God.

There is no use in Protestants affecting to misunderstand the devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the difference between intercession and atonement. Intercession is one thing, atonement another—they are as wide as the poles asunder. Milner sums this up in saying, "There are many mediators of intercession, only one Mediator of atonement." The whole burnt-offering of adoration is offered to God alone. Bossuet, too, plainly declares Catholic doctrine :—

"The decisions of the Church are not less clear and precise than they are firm and lasting, always obviating whatever might give occasion to the mind of man to go astray. Honouring the saints in her assemblies was honouring God, the author of their sanctity and bliss; and demanding of them the partnership of their prayers was joining ourselves to the choirs of angels, to the spirits of the perfectly just, and to the Church of the first-born which are in heaven. So holy a practice may be discovered ever since the first ages; nor is the beginning of it to be discovered there, since none can then be found who were noted for innovation in that regard. The thing most to be feared with respect to the ignorant was lest they should make the invocation of saints too like to that of God, and their intercession too like that of Jesus Christ; but the Council of Trent instructs us fully as to these two points by warning us that the saints pray—which places them at an infinite distance from Him who gives; and that

they pray through Jesus Christ—which places them infinitely beneath Him who is heard through Himself."

There is really hardly any use in labouring the point; the question is not the illusions of the ignorant or the vulgar, but the faith delivered by Christ to His apostles and His Church, all else is *vox et praeterea nihil.* Even Spenser, whose sympathies were certainly not Catholic, believed in intercession, which, however, he confined to the angels, ignoring what our Lord Himself says, "That the saints shall be as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 30). He wrote:—

And is there care in heaven, and is there love
  In heavenly spirits, to these creatures base
That may compassion to their evils move?
  There is; or else more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But oh! the exceeding grace
  Of highest God! that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
  That blessed angels He sends to and fro',
  To serve to wicked men,—to serve His foe.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
  To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
  The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
  They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
  And all for love, and nothing for reward;
  Oh! why should God for man have such regard!

Did Spenser, then, make a distinction between the angels and the beatified spirits of the just, who were created to fill the vacant thrones of

the fallen angels? Did he believe that Dives, though in hell, could take an interest in his brethren still on earth, and yet hold that the blessed took no such interest or were powerless to give effect to it? The intercession of the angels may then, according to Protestant belief, be accepted—nay, can hardly be rejected in the face of our Lord's positive assurance "that their angels in heaven see the face of My Father who is in heaven." Any such intercession, however, of the beatified spirits is, we are told, one of the corruptions of Rome, and yet the tradition of the entire East and of the early Christians was that it was to the prayers of St. Stephen, the first martyr, that St. Paul owed his conversion. If Stephen's face, as the Scriptures tell us, shone as if it had been that of an angel, we may well believe that he immediately joined them. Stephen, then, in the moment of martyrdom could pray, and, in the words of Spenser, "Come to succour us that succour want," but, once admitted to the beatific vision, could not. We are to believe, then, that this power of intercession—this power of prayer—ceases when it is most wanted, only ceases for these beatified spirits when they have "entered into the joy of their Lord." Surely this is a hard saying, they either cease to pray or their prayers are not heard. If so, how can they be said to fill the vacant thrones?

CHAPTER X.

KEBLE was born and wrote before his time. A little later the beautiful verses of Longfellow, who wrote in the spirit of Dante, touched Protestants as well as Catholics. In his lines on the Blessed Virgin he makes Prince Henry, on gaining a view of Italy after passing the Alps, say :—

Oh, had I faith as in the days gone by
That knew no doubt, and feared no mystery !
This is, indeed, the blessed Mary's land,
Virgin and Mother of our dear Redeemer !
All hearts are touched and softened at her name ;
Alike the bandit with the blood-stained hand,
The priest, the prince, the scholar and the peasant,
The man of deeds, the visionary dreamer,
Pay homage to her as one ever present !
And even as children who have much offended
A too indulgent father, in great shame,
Penitent, and yet not daring unattended
To go into his presence, at the gate
Speak with their sister, and confiding wait
'Til she goes in before, and intercedes,
So men, repenting of their evil deeds,
And yet not venturing rashly to draw near
With their requests an angry Father's ear,
Offer to her their prayers and their confession,
And she for them in heaven makes intercession.
And, if our faith had given us nothing more
Than this example of all womanhood,
So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,
So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure,
This were enough to prove it higher and truer
Than all the creeds the world had known before.

Again, do we not find that sore and stricken hearts and lives—and over the earth there are unknown multitudes of such—turn instinctively to her whose own heart "was pierced with a sword of grief"? The German poet, Karl Simrock, whose very spirit breathes in Clarence Mangan's translation, describes one such life in his "O Maria Regina Misericordiæ!"

There lived a knight long years ago,
Proud, carnal, vain, devotionless.
Of God above, or hell below,
He took no thought, but, undismayed,
Pursued his course of wickedness.
His heart was rock; he never prayed
To be forgiven for all his treasons;
He only said, at certain seasons,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

Years rolled on and found him still the same,
Still draining Pleasure's poison-bowl;
Yet felt he now and then some shame;
The torment of the Undying Worm
At whiles woke in his trembling soul;
And then, though powerless to reform,
Would he, in hope to appease that sternest
Avenger, cry, and more in earnest,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

At last Youth's riotous time was gone,
And loathing now came after sin.
With locks yet brown he felt as one
Grown grey at heart; and oft with tears
He tried, but all in vain, to win
From the dark desert of his years
One flower of hope; yet morn and e'ening
He still cried, but with deeper meaning,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

A happier mind, a holier mood,
A purer spirit, ruled him now:
No more in thrall to flesh and blood,
He took a pilgrim-staff in hand,
And, under a religious vow,
Travailed his way to Pommerland;
There entered he an humble cloister,
Exclaiming, while his eyes grew moister,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

Here, shorn and cowled, he laid his cares
Aside, and wrought for God alone.
Albeit he sang no choral prayers,
Nor matin hymn, nor laud could learn,
He mortified his flesh to stone;
For him no penance was too stern;
And often he prayed on his lonely
Cell-couch at night, but still said only,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

And thus he lived long, long; and when
God's angels called him, thus he died.
Confession made he none to men,
Yet, when they anointed him with oil,
He seemed already glorified.
His penances, his tears, his toil
Were past; and now, with passionate sighing,
Praise thus broke from his lips while dying,
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

They buried him with mass and song
Aneath a little knoll so green;
But, lo! a wonder-sight! ere long,
Rose, blooming, from that verdant mound
The fairest lily ever seen;
And, on its petal-edges round,
Relieving their translucent whiteness,
Did shine these words in gold-hued brightness:
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

And, would God's angels give thee power,
Thou, dearest reader, might'st behold
The fibres of this holy flower
Upspringing from the dead man's heart,
In tremulous threads of light and gold;
Then wouldst thou choose the better part,
And thenceforth flee Sin's foul suggestions;
Thy sole response to mocking questions:
"O Mary, Queen of Mercy!"

—Luke x. 42.

There is just the one jarring note in this otherwise wonderful melody, or rather a note which merely showed that Simrock was not a Catholic and therefore could mistake Catholic doctrine in writing:—

Confession made he none to men,
Yet, when they anointed him with oil, etc.

Catholic doctrine is that he never could have received the last rites of the Church without the previous confession, if able to make it.

Another bruised spirit and tormented heart, St. Mary of Egypt, tells us how she in her misery appealed to the Mother of Sorrows, and did not appeal in vain. Her autobiography as given in "The Fathers of the Desert" is perhaps at once one of the shortest and most complete accounts of a life that has ever been written. She believed—and whoever reads her account will share her belief—that her prayers for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin were heard, and that her conversion and complete change of life were due to that intercession. Catholics know and have daily experience that the

Blessed Virgin's intercession is a living influence in the Church of her Divine Son, and that to-day, as in the days of St. Mary of Egypt, there are miracles of grace and of mercy due to that intercession. Certainly the story of St. Mary of Egypt shows that her case was just such a miracle of grace and of mercy. She tells us :—

"I was born in Egypt. At the age of twelve years I left my father and mother, and without their consent I went to Alexandria, where I lived for seventeen years plunged in all sorts of crime. One summer's day, having seen a great number of persons going to Jerusalem, to celebrate there the festival of the exaltation of the holy Cross, I embarked with them, and I plunged into the most frightful disorders during the journey. When the day of the festival arrived, I went with others to the church, where the Cross of our Saviour was exposed to the veneration of the faithful. But it was impossible for me to enter, and when I trod on the threshold, I felt myself repelled by a secret and invincible power. Two or three times I repeated my endeavours, each time in vain. I had no doubt my abominable life closed the gate of the temple against me. This reflection touched me and made me shed tears. I struck my breast and sighed deeply. Casting up my eyes to an image of the Mother of God, and addressing myself to her, I conjured her, by her incomparable purity to have compassion on an unfortunate sinner, and beg God to accept

my sighs and my repentance. I entreated her to obtain also for me the favour of entering the church and beholding the Sacred Wood, the instrument of our redemption. I promised at the same time to consecrate myself to the Lord by a penitential life, and I took the Blessed Virgin a pledge of the sincerity of my promise.

"Having finished my prayer I felt greatly consoled. Then, presenting myself at the gate of the church, I entered without difficulty, and proceeded even as far as the choir. There I had the happiness of venerating that precious Cross which has given life to man. Struck by the incomparable mercy of God, and the goodness with which He receives penitent sinners, I prostrated myself on the earth, and I watered the pavement with my tears; after which I left the church and returned to the image of her whom I had taken as a guarantee of my new engagements. I knelt down and said to her: 'Most merciful Mother of God, thou hast shown thy goodness to me in hearing my prayer, notwithstanding my unworthiness. It is time, holy Virgin, to accomplish, by thy assistance, that which I have promised. Send me where thou wilt, be thou my guide in the road of salvation and penance.' Then I heard a voice which said to me: 'If you cross the Jordan, you shall find peace.' I applied these words to myself, and I went out, weeping, and looking at the image, exclaimed: 'Virgin, by whom salvation came to men, abandon me not!' At these words I set out in great haste, and

having bought three loaves, I took the road which led to the Jordan; and I walked the whole of that day, shedding torrents of tears. Having arrived at the church of St. John the Baptist, on the banks of the Jordan, and having recommended myself to the Blessed Virgin, I hid myself in this solitude, where I have lived forty-seven years. I tremble now at the remembrance of the temptations I have had to endure. For seventeen years I struggled against a thousand violent desires and violent inclinations to evil. In the middle of these assaults I began to weep and strike my breast; I recollected my solemn promise and the image of the holy Mother of God, who had taken me under her protection; I begged her to deliver me from those thoughts which afflicted my soul. Then I saw a bright light, which surrounded me on all sides, and my soul became calm. In this manner, have I in all my struggles, raised without ceasing my heart to this Immaculate Virgin, who had answered for me; and she has never failed to assist me." —*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

On the other hand, if we would understand the secret of the lives of those beautiful souls who, like St. Francis Xavier and St. Philip Neri, in the morning of life gave themselves to God, realising the full force of the text: "Oh, how good it is for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. iii. 27), we discover that they too felt the same heavenly attraction to the Virgin Mother, and seem, like

St. John the Evangelist, to have heard the voice of their Lord saying to them also, "Son, behold thy Mother." Their love and devotion to her was as of sons, and only ceased with their lives—St. Philip Neri in his last hours incessantly invoking her, and St. Francis Xavier with dying accents murmuring her name and calling on her in the words of the "Ave Maris Stella," "Monstra te esse Matrem." If Protestants would know one of the many reasons which influence Catholics in their devotion and love for the Blessed Virgin, it is because they see how profoundly that devotion has influenced the lives of those who practised it, and they cannot think that the devotion which, as in the case of these illustrious servants of God was part of their very lives, accompanied as it was by the greatest sanctity, was without the closest and most intimate relation to that sanctity. They believe, too, that the prayers and intercession which these two saints incessantly asked helped to shape their wondrous and beautiful lives. Sir James Stephen, who will be quoted presently, has told us that a nobler, more memorable or more useful life than Xavier's was never lived on earth, and St. Philip Neri's was not unlike it. They alone have earned for themselves the title of modern Apostles, the one the Apostle of the Indies, the other the Apostle of Rome. Surely it is not a little remarkable that Apostles as they were like St. John, like him, too, they devoted themselves to

the Blessed Virgin, and called her their mother.

Of St. Francis Xavier, Sir James Stephen, in an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, afterwards republished in his volume of "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography," wrote:—

"From the days of St. Paul to our own the annals of mankind exhibit no other example of a soul borne onward so triumphantly through distress and danger in all their most appalling aspects. He battled with hunger and thirst, and nakedness and assassination, and pursued his mission of love with even increasing ardour amidst the wildest war of the contending elements. At the island of Moro (one of the group of the Moluccas) he took his stand at the foot of a volcano, and as the pillar of fire threw up its wreaths to heaven, and the earth tottered beneath him, and the firmament was rent by falling rocks and peals of unintermitting thunder, he pointed to the fierce lightnings and the river of molten lava, and called on the agitated crowd which clung to him for safety to repent and to obey the truth; figuring to them at the same time that the sounds which racked their ears were as the groans of the infernal world, and the sights which blasted their eyes as an outbreak from the atmosphere of the place of torment. Repairing for the celebration of Mass to some edifice which he had consecrated for the purpose, an earthquake shook the building to its base. The terrified worshippers fled; but Xavier, standing in meek composure before

the rocking altar, deliberately completed that mysterious sacrifice, 'rejoicing,' as he states in his description of the scene, 'to perceive that the demons of the island thus attested their flight before the archangel's sword, from the place where they had so long exercised their foul dominion.' There is no schoolboy of our days who could not teach much, unsuspected by St. Francis Xavier, of the laws which govern the material and spiritual worlds; but we have not many doctors who knew as much as he did of the nature of Him by whom the worlds of matter and of spirit were created; for he studied in the school of protracted martyrdom and active philanthropy, where are divulged secrets unknown and unimagined by the wisest and the most learned of ordinary men. Imparting everywhere such knowledge as he possessed, he ranged over no small part of the Indian Archipelago, and at length retraced his steps to Malacca—if even yet his exhortations and his prayers might avert her threatened doom. The earthly toils and projects of the saint were now to cease for ever. The angel of death appeared with a summons, for which, since death first entered our world, no man was ever more triumphantly prepared. It found him on board the vessel on the point of departing for Siam. At his own request he was removed to the shore, that he might meet his end with greater composure. Stretched on the naked beach, with the cold blasts of a Chinese winter aggravating his pains, he contended alone with the agonies

of the fever which wasted his vital power. It was a solitude and an agony for which the happiest of the sons of men might well have exchanged the dearest society and the purest of the joys of life. It was an agony in which his still uplifted crucifix reminded him of a far more awful one endured for his deliverance; and a solitude thronged by blessed ministers of peace and consolation, visible in all their bright and lovely aspects to the now unclouded eye of faith, and audible to the dying martyr through the yielding bars of his mortal prison house in strains of exulting joy till then unheard and unimagined. Tears burst from his fading eyes, tears of an emotion too big for utterance. In the cold collapse of death, his features were for a few brief moments irradiated, as with the first beams of approaching glory. He raised himself on his crucifix, and exclaiming, 'In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum,' he bowed his head and died."

It is a little singular that there were two lives which possessed so great an attraction for the late Rev. Henry James Coleridge, D.D., that he became the biographer of both, giving us his "Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier," and his life of that other Francis—Francis Suarez, the "Doctor Eximius," "a theologian," he says, "surpassed by no one since the days of St. Thomas Aquinas." The life of Suarez has a special bearing on the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Perhaps no more remarkable instance of the tremendous efficacy and power of prayer, of

how the prayer of the just man pierces the heavens, and of the intercessory power given to the Virgin Mother of God, the "Virgo potens," of her direct and visible intervention in the lives of men, exists than the case of Suarez, as told by Dr. Coleridge in his admirable and only too brief sketch of his life. Suarez had been sent to the University of Salamanca, but both there and later exhibited such extraordinary dulness and want of capacity that when he sought to enter religion he was refused. "We don't want good little souls," cried St. Teresa, when some one for whom nothing more could be said than what is contained in that very ordinary commendation was presented to her as a candidate for Mount Carmel. Her words might sometimes be remembered with advantage by those who would crowd convents and monasteries with unexceptionable specimens of amiable mediocrity. It was on this ground chiefly that Francis Suarez was refused admission into religion. The good fathers to whom was confided the care of examining his vocation admired his angelic innocence and praised the goodness of his intentions, but they unanimously concluded that he was not fit for the Society. His constitution was not strong, but the real ground of his rejection was that his intellectual capacity was below the required standard. He was "a good little soul," and had better go elsewhere; all the more, because his noble birth might naturally raise expectations that he would be employed in some of the more

prominent posts, and would, consequently, make it more remarkable and more galling to himself if, on account of his dulness, he were always kept in the background. Happily, Suarez may have been dull at that age, but at least he was resolute. The rector at Salamanca had refused him, but there was a higher authority—the Provincial of Castille. To him Suarez betook himself. He was at Valladolid, and received the applicant very kindly; but he referred the question of his admission to his own "consultors." These fathers examined Suarez and came to the same conclusion with their brethren at Salamanca. He might do well enough elsewhere, but he had neither the strength nor capacity for the particular work of the Society. The Provincial had seen a good deal of the youth during his stay at Valladolid, but it does not appear that he had discovered more in him than the others. Nevertheless, he felt a strong internal impulse to yield to the application. He was quite free to do so, and accordingly, turning to the consultors, he told them that the youth whom they did not think worthy of admission would one day prove a great honour to the Order, and even an ornament to the Church. Suarez was sent back to Salamanca with a letter directing the rector to admit him into the Society. This letter was, of course, obeyed; but Francis was not sent to the Noviceship before he had signed an agreement in writing, in which he declared his willingness to serve, if so required, in one or other of the

inferior grades of the Society, and freely abandon all claim to be applied to the higher studies. This document was long preserved in the college at Salamanca. Suarez entered the Novitiate at Medina del Campo in the month of June, 1564. After a single year at Medina del Campo, he was sent back to Salamanca, to begin some studies in philosophy. A new course of logic was just beginning. It was probably no fault of his professor that he did not succeed well, for the rest of his companions found no difficulty. But Suarez seemed doomed to justify to the full the anticipations of those who had pronounced him to be wanting in mental power. He was quick, and even clever, in other things, but he could make nothing of his studies. No one could blame him for want of industry and application; yet, when he came to dispute in the class, or to repeat what he had been taught, he failed entirely. His dulness became a proverb, as had been the case before him with Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

One of his companions was appointed to help him, by going over the lectures with him in private after they had both listened to the professor. It was an ungrateful and wearisome task. At last the courage of Francis failed, and he went to the rector of the college to beg to be allowed to give up study altogether, as he was so unfit for it; he was perfectly content to be employed all his life in humbler occupations.

Once more the future theologian was saved by the happy inspiration of his superior. The

rector, Father Martin Guttierez, was eminent, even when so many deserved eminence, for his virtue, his learning, and the success that attended his preaching, and his other labours for the good of souls. When Suarez presented himself with the humble prayer that we have just mentioned, Father Guttierez would not grant it. He encouraged him to persevere, and to redouble his prayers for aid to the Father of Lights. Francis obeyed; and as he had from his earliest years had a most tender devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, he implored also her special intercession in his trouble. Suddenly a change came over him; his mind seemed to open to a new sense, and when he went again to the schools, he found himself able to penetrate and grasp the doctrines of the professor with the utmost ease and quickness. His fellow-student came to help him as he was wont, expecting the same unthankful task that he had so often performed before; but he suddenly found the matter of the lecture set before him in the most lucid manner, and difficulties and objections suggested which he was not himself capable either of seeing or of at once answering. In short, Suarez became all at once the leader and the oracle among the students. It certainly cannot surprise us if he always attributed the change that came over him to preternatural gift bestowed in answer to his prayers. His case only adds another to a long list of instances in which powers of the highest kind, which were to be exercised during

a long life for the service of the Church, have been bestowed or evoked in such a manner as to show, beyond the possibility of mistake, that they do not belong to the person enriched with them. All intellectual gifts are, indeed, but loans; and they are abused indeed if they are not used for the service of the Giver; but they bring with them, as their shadow, the temptation to pride and self-complacency, and the greatest blessing that can be attached to them is the circumstance or condition that acts as a safeguard to the humility without which they so often prove the occasion of the greatest ruin. The Catholic Church in the century in which we live has seen more than one conspicuous instance of the ruin of which we speak. In the case of Suarez, his whole life bears witness that he never forgot the lesson that had been taught him at the outset of his career as a student. His early piety, and the conviction that he owed the illumination of his mind to the intercession of our Blessed Lady, gave a turn and colour to some of his earliest efforts, which were not abandoned as he grew older and more famous. When we come to speak of his way of life at the time that he was most of all given to intellectual speculation and literary composition, we shall see how large a share of his time was given to exercises of piety and mental prayer. He it is who has left behind him that wonderful saying that, rather than give up an hour of prayer, he would willingly renounce not only the knowledge that he had himself

received from God, but all the knowledge possessed by all the world put together, if it could belong to himself alone. Another memorable saying of his is often quoted. In his last illness, once he had seemed to be in his agony, and the last prayers for a departing soul were recited by his side; but the paroxysm passed away, he recovered his senses, and woke up as from a deep sleep with a face bright with joy, and with words on his lips which have since become famous: "I never thought that it was so sweet to die."

Lives like that of St. Francis Xavier and that of Suarez have never ceased in the Catholic Church — they have appeared like beacon lights in every generation. Catholics make a point of closely studying these pure and holy lives; they observe in how marvellous a manner these men have carried out the first and greatest of the Commandments, how, by what seems a miracle of grace, they have been enabled to obey literally and in a way not given to ordinary men the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and with all thy mind and all thy strength," almost as if they were already in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, so that St. Francis Xavier, in transports of Divine love, called out "Enough, O Lord, enough!" Catholics have not failed to note that these chosen souls have been, of all others, the most devoted to the Blessed Virgin, never dreaming of separating the Mother and the Son. This

combined sanctity and devotion to the Mother of God was also the distinguishing characteristic of the spiritual master of St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, whose face was such a mirror of his interior peace that when some one who had never seen him asked how amongst a number of others he would know him, received the reply, "You will know him by this sign, he is ever speaking of God, and his eyes are ever raised to heaven." St. Philip Neri said his expression was so wonderful that he never tired of looking at his face. Scarcely less remarkable with respect to this devotion was that other member of his Order and contemporary of St. Francis Xavier, St. Peter Clavier the Apostle, as was Cardinal de Lavigerie in our own day, of that oppressed and suffering race which in Africa and America seems to stand apart from the rest of mankind—the race which, if it is the lot of all God's creatures to work, to suffer, and to die, have had, according to the mysterious decrees of Providence, suffering as their especial portion. Clavier and Lavigerie were dowered with the most tender devotion to our Lady, as if from that fountain of compassion, of sorrow and of love, they were to drink in those deep draughts of pity, which inspired them to devote their heroic lives to the sublime task of rescuing, of lifting up, and of consoling that most abandoned portion of the human race which has had to drink of the overflowing cup of sorrow.

St. Peter Faber, too, had a particular and

special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He divided her life into three parts, denominating from her immaculate conception till the Annunciation, the time of preparation; from thence till the Resurrection of our Lord, the time of compassion; and from the Resurrection till the Assumption, the time of desire. To console himself in any trial, he used to think how often the Blessed Virgin was deprived of the company of our Lord during His earthly mission; he had great devotion to the Feasts of the Annunciation and the Holy Trinity. On her feasts the Blessed Virgin must often have inspired her servants with important resolutions. For example, St. Peter Faber, on the Feast of the Presentation, formed a resolution which coloured his entire life, and which there can be little doubt had much to do with his sanctity and with his passing, when his hour came, to his Lord with clean lips and a pure heart.

CHAPTER XI.

The Reformation and the lives of those two great saints, St. Francis Xavier and St. Philip Neri, synchronised, and St. Francis Xavier in particular set himself to stem the rising torrent. But how, and in what spirit? He began with self-conquest. When someone on board the East Indiaman, in which he sailed to the East, reproached him with washing his own shirt, and that his doing so was unworthy of his rank, he answered sternly that it was that sort of folly which had lost half of Christendom to the Church. England was so lost—lost in a generation. That Church which had struck such deep roots in English soil that it had lasted a thousand years, from Bede to Fisher and More, disappeared as if swept away by a hurricane. St. Francis Xavier's conviction was that over a great part of Europe, and not confining this to any one country, vast numbers, shepherds and sheep, had been alike unfaithful. The instinct of mankind is sound, they never dissever faith and practice. The question now is, Has the hurricane spent itself? Is the cloud, which St. Edward the Confessor predicted would rest on England for 300 years, about to pass? Whatever its nature, there is certainly a movement. The heart of England is being stirred. That great Prince of the Church, the

late Cardinal Vaughan, in dedicating as he did at the commencement of his Episcopate England and her thirty-six millions to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, instinctively realized and would seem to have had a sort of premonition that if England were ever to get the grace of conversion, ever to return to the old religion, ever to get back the faith, she must owe it to the Blessed Virgin and to her special protection and intercession. The Catholic Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Whiteside, when recently drawing attention to the fact that the annual conversions to the Catholic Faith in Liverpool alone numbered three hundred, added the significant circumstance that when Protestants these converts were all religious men, attending church regularly and living in the presence of God. When, therefore, the time of God's providence is ripe, whether for individuals or nations, strange events often occur. If the prophecy of Edward the Confessor holds good, there may be soon significant events in the religious history of England. They have occurred elsewhere. For example, this was notably the case in that remarkable mission of St. Catharine of Sienna to Avignon for the purpose of urging Gregory XI to return to Rome, a decision deemed to be of vital importance to the Church. It is historically true that she had a great part in the final return of the Holy See from Avignon. The Pope had long hesitated and still hesitated ; he made preparations and issued orders, but it was with slowness

and reluctance; and at any time a change might come over the state of affairs in Italy that might be the occasion of indefinite delay. One day he again asked her opinion. She said she was a poor weak woman; how should she give advice to the Sovereign Pontiff? "I do not ask you to counsel me," he replied, "but to tell me what is the will of God." Again she excused herself; and Gregory again urged her, commanding her at last by virtue of her obedience (she was a religious) to tell him what she knew of God's will as to the matter. She bowed her head—"Who knows the will of God better than your Holiness, who have promised Him by vow to return to Rome?" Gregory had never revealed his vow to living soul; and from that moment his determination was taken.

Probably since the days of that other Pope Gregory the Great, who in 596 A.D., now 1200 years ago, sent St. Augustine to those whom he had lovingly called *Angeli non Angli*, angels if they were only Christians, no pontiff has ever turned to England with more eager interest, more longing gaze than the late Pope Leo XIII. It is said her name was ever in his heart, often on his lips.

England again and again would seem to have resolved to sever herself utterly from her Catholic past, but that is impossible. That past is all around her, in her churches and their Lady Chapels, in her cathedrals—those temples "with nothing like unto them," Catholic, and

built by Catholics, and still ineffaceably Catholic; Catholic, too, is England in the heroism still tingling in her blood, inspired by the victories of her Edwards and her Henry V; in her colleges, her Winchester and the Eton of her saintly Henry VI. England, if she would, cannot escape from her glorious—her Catholic past. The voices of some of the greatest and noblest of her sons are coming back to her through the centuries, just as but yesterday kindred and Catholic voices, though not born Catholic—those of her Newmans and her Mannings—were sounding in her ears, England and the world listening to them.

There have been two remarkable lives in England—lives of moment and of far-reaching consequence; remarkable both as to their time and their circumstances. The life of the one passed during what might be called the sunset of the faith, the other in that of its dawn, a dawn no doubt glimmering and uncertain, but still its dawn. We refer to Sir Thomas More and Cardinal Newman.

Of Sir Thomas More, the *Spectator*, in the summary of its issue for October 28, 1882, wrote: "It is stated in telegrams from Rome that the Pope is favourably inclined towards the beatification and ultimate canonisation of Sir Thomas More, the Chancellor of Henry VIII, who died a martyr for the Catholic faith, and of Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, executed by the same king, mainly because he accepted a cardinal's

hat without permission. Sir Thomas More, with his learning, his beautiful character, and his martyrdom, would make a splendid saint for English Catholics ; and Fisher's personal character was one of great dignity and sweetness. But Cardinal Manning, who is said to be promoting the recognition of these worthies, must read More's 'Utopia' with care, for the *advocatus Diaboli*, if he knows his business, may not improbably accuse that work of heresy in its argument for toleration. We thought, too, that Rome demanded miracles to prove saintship, and the only miracle More ever performed—though we admit that is one—was so bearing himself as a sincere Catholic that successive generations of Protestants retained an impression of the sanctity of his character. He is, we think, the only English Catholic martyr who left that tradition behind him." Surely a beautiful tribute. Are there many English statesmen, or men of the world, since the Reformation, of whom the *Spectator* could thus write ? These two men, More and Newman, stand out, and will ever stand out, as amongst the greatest and noblest of Englishmen, and yet they were in nothing more conspicuous than in their intense Catholicism; with both the defence of its every doctrine became the work of their lives. The very devotion in question, that to our Lady, Newman, as we have seen, defended, first in "Loss and Gain," and then with such loving zeal and ardour in his discussion with Dr. Pusey that we seem almost to hear the prayer on his lips contained

in the versicle of the Church, "Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O Sacred Virgin; give me strength against thine enemies." These two illustrious men have a certain fascination for their Protestant countrymen, a fascination due to commanding intellect and lofty character, combined with great beauty of life; but Catholics are bound to them by far warmer ties—ties of reverence and of gratitude as champions of the Faith, the one defending it with his pen and with his life, the other in those immortal works which have given him a foremost place in the literature of his country. A comparison of More and Newman has a certain interest. They were no ordinary men. They both possessed, in a superlative degree, that sober, disciplined and sane type of intellect most prized by Englishmen. They had this much, too, in common, they were both constrained to study the same question, the one by the force of circumstances, the other by conscience. It is not a little remarkable that these two illustrious men, amongst the greatest of their respective centuries, the one born in the Church, the other born out of it, both adopted almost the same methods, both trod the same paths, were both subjected to the same tremendous strain, and both arrived at the same bourne. Newman had gone to the fountain-head, had satisfied himself from a study of the Fathers what the Fathers held, and what they taught. More, though born a Catholic had, three centuries before, done exactly the same thing—had, he

tells us, devoted seven years to the question, had studied the Fathers, and had satisfied himself what the general law of Christ's Catholic Church was. He then applied this law as a test to every doctrine: Was, or was it not, a portion of the general law—was, or was it not, a doctrine of the Catholic Church? More and Newman arrived at exactly the same destination, came to exactly the same conclusion—the one to abide by the general law, the other to accept that law. Surely a marvellous coincidence and worthy of study by any reflecting mind. To both at last, after prolonged and laborious quest, had come the hour when the momentous decision had to be taken—the one whether he was to remain a Catholic, the other whether he was to become one. More, on his way to the Tower, announced his decision to his son-in-law, in the memorable words: "Son Roper, my mind is made up—the field is won." To Newman, too, at last, after storm and stress it was permitted to say, "the field is won." To both, however, before the goal was reached, there had come—oh, what searchings—what burning of heart. For More the path lay through the Tower and the block; not till he had passed through that dread ordeal was it given to him to say that he had won the good fight, to join the white-robed army of martyrs. What Newman suffered it is said that even his intimates never knew, but he had the martyrdom of the spirit—he suffered, until at last to him, too, the end came, when he entered Father Dominick the Passion-

ist's cell and bowed his head like a little child. Both More and Newman got their tremendous reward, and Catholics know the hidden source of that reward, that in both cases the good seed had been sown on good ground, in both soils had bloomed "the white flower of a blameless life"; to both men it had been given to say with St. Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith"; to both we can well believe it hath been vouchsafed to hear the triumphant *Euge*, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Surely it is worth the while of English Protestants to study these exemplary and illuminating lives; they may have been given as a sign; there is a lesson in them for all who care to read it. Here were two men of the noblest natures, of the greatest natural powers, with the bravest hearts, and with intellects tempered like Damascus blades; and yet it was not their subtle intelligence, not their dialectical skill, not that pride of intellect on which the world now so plumes itself, which won the field. They both, as their lives prove, before they could say "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith," had to be "purified yet so as by fire." Newman, distracted by doubts and difficulties, driven hither and thither, buffeted, groping, had to call out in his anguish—to plead, to pray—for what? for light, and to "the Light of lights—the Light of every man that cometh into this world." "Lead, kindly light." More was only permitted to keep the faith by

sealing it with his blood. Newman, in his way a martyr, was not called upon to suffer unto blood, but he had to surrender his very heart strings. What is the lesson of these lives—what is their trumpet note? That both men were faithful unto death; that both hearkened to the command, "Hear the Church"; that both men bowed to her God-given authority, acknowledging that in the last resort there alone an anchor was to be found.

The spiritual beauty of Newman's soul was shown by his hymn to his guardian angel:—

Mine oldest friend, mine from the hour
  When first I drew my breath,
My faithful friend that shall be mine
  Unfailing till my death.

Mine when I shall stand before the Judge,
  And mine if spared to stay
Within the golden furnace till
  My sin is burned away.

And mine, O brother of my soul,
  When my release shall come,
Thy gentle arms shall lift me then,
  Thy wings shall waft me home.

Newman had the instinct of faith, the gift of faith. St. John, sixty years after the Ascension of our Lord, describing this faith and what it had done, says: "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith." Not your faith nor my faith, but "our faith"—the faith of Christendom. Newman accepted the whole deposit of faith. We see this in his "Dream of Gerontius," as in everything that he wrote. In

that wonderful "Dream of Gerontius" we hear the soul in her agony praying—praying as she had never prayed before, for she knows that her time for prayer is all but spent. And how does she pray: "O Jesu, help! Pray for me, Mary, pray! Some angel, Jesu, such as came to Thee in Thine own agony! Mary, pray for me! Joseph, pray for me! Mary, pray for me!"

And then, when all is over and the soul is saved, the Guardian Angel sings:—

> All praise to Him at whose sublime decree
> The last are first, the first become the last.
> By whom proud first-borns from their thrones are cast;
> Who raises Mary to be Queen of Heaven,
> When Lucifer is left condemned and unforgiven.

Newman was a thorough Catholic. The attitude of the Church to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin is perfectly intelligible and consistent, and in thorough and complete accord with that observed by her with regard to the entire deposit of faith and practice. Whilst, on the one hand, guarding and cherishing the devotion, and allowing it every legitimate freedom of expansion and manifestation, she has ever guided, directed and controlled it, she herself inspired by her Divine Spouse, who has promised "to be with her all days, unto the consummation of the world."

As showing the devotion of Sir Thomas More to the Blessed Virgin, there is preserved at Stonyhurst College, amongst the sacred objects belonging to him, and thus entered in

the old catalogue of the Stonyhurst Museum, "a Cameo—the head of the Blessed Virgin—formerly belonging to Sir T. More." There is also at the college what is called "The Sodality Crucifix." Its inscription, in Greek, says that "this is a relic of St. Thomas the Apostle." Inside the cross now are bits of half decayed paper, on which is written "St. Charles Borromeo," with some very small relics. There is also a bit of wood without any writing. The following is copied from the original document:

"I, Thomas More, of the Society of Jesus, and last of the family of Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, with the leave and approbation of R. F. Philip Carteret Provincial, do give unto the Sodality of our Blessed Lady in the English College at St. Omers this large gold cross, formerly belonging unto, and us'd or wore by Sir Thomas More himself, and since his time kept with great care in our family.

"Witness my hand, June 29th, 1755.

"Thos. More.

"Philip Carteret, Provincial.'

The college has another gold cross of More, marked in catalogue "298, a gold cross which belonged to Sir T. More." It is a small but beautifully enamelled crucifix.

The estimate formed of Sir T. More by those who were almost his contemporaries may be seen from the title of a work by Thomas Stapleton, Reg. Prof. of Douay and Louvain, published in 1612: "Tres Thomæ, seu res

Gestæ S. Thomæ Apostoli — S. Thomæ, Archiep. Cantuar — Thomæ More, Colon. Agripp. 1612." His name is still associated with those of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

It is not a little remarkable, or, as Catholics would say, providential and showing the hand of God, the blood of martyrs being the seed of the Church, that the very parish close to the parish church of Chelsea, in which Sir T. More with his noble martyr face had so often prayed, had so often lifted up his troubled soul to God, imploring Him to grant him the strength and support he so sorely needed in the dread struggle that was before him—it is remarkable that this parish of Chelsea was amongst the very first in London and in England, 300 years after More had given up his pure soul to God, to get back the faith and to have a Catholic church. Surely we may say the hand of God is here. One of the humblest and most beautiful Orders in the Church has now charge of a portion of the old parish of Chelsea—an Order so meek and lowly, and which seems to have formed itself on the example of and to bear the impress of the Virgin of the "Magnificat," of the Mother of Him who had "had regard to the humility of His handmaid" —an Order which, above all others, has consecrated itself to her special service, and the salvation of souls through her intercession, under the title of Servants of Mary, or Servites. As Londoners know, their beautiful church is in

the Fulham Road. This Order is itself remarkable. Long before organized opposition to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin was thought of, three centuries before what now constitutes Protestantism was heard of, in that thirteenth century—the century of the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi, when Christianity throughout Europe was still a vital force, with something of its first fervour and of its early bloom still upon it, this beautiful Order arose and spread over the Christian world. To-day it is at work in the land of Mary's dowry and almost on the very ground which blessed Thomas More hallowed by his holy and beautiful life.

The Seven Founders, as they are called, of the Servite Order, whose first foundation and parent house was at Monte Sennario, near Florence, were born in the same century with Dante and Giotto; and it is not at all improbable that the enthusiastic consecration of their genius by those mighty artists, the one the father of Italian poetry, the other of Italian painting, to the exaltation and glory of the Blessed Virgin was to some extent inspired by the extraordinary effect produced over all Italy by the sanctity of the Seven Founders and of St. Philip Benisius, a subject of which Italy from end to end was then full.

Dante is *par excellence* the Marian poet, as St. Bernard is the Marian doctor, and Ledoux, the author of the "History of the Seven Founders," after quoting Dante's hymn "O Virgin Mother," already given from the *Paradiso*, goes on to

say: "This hymn of gratitude to the beneficent Queen of Heaven which is placed by the great Florentine poet in the mouth of St. Bernard may well be taken as typical of the constant attitude of mind of those who claimed especially the title of her servants; and the concluding lines of that most beautiful address, in which Dante beseeches her

To drive
Each cloud of our mortality away
Through her own prayers, that on the sovereign joy
Unveiled we gaze,

and goes on to entreat her, 'the Queen who can do what she wills,' that she would preserve all pure affections and quell all evil passions within us—these words inspired by the poet's genius," says Père Ledoux, "do but represent the Servite's unceasing prayer for himself, his brethren, and all mankind."

How in this very parish of Chelsea the Penal Laws had done their work, how the iron had entered the souls of the handful of English Catholics still left, what was the state of anxiety in which they lived, is shown by the experience of Father Thomas Sisk, who had been entrusted by the saintly Bishop Bramston with what was then the extensive parish of Chelsea. Of its extent and population some idea may be formed if we bear in mind that out of the Chelsea mission of those days (the end of the twenties and beginning of the thirties) have grown up the missions of the Oratory, Brompton; St. Thomas's, Fulham; Little Chelsea,

Mortlake, Roehampton, Wandsworth, Richmond, and others. Those were days when, after the Emancipation Act, the Catholics of England were beginning to breathe. Many Catholic devotions and practices so familiar to us now, such as the Month of Mary, the Way of the Cross, missions and retreats, were then almost unknown, while statues of our Blessed Lady were nowhere to be seen in Catholic churches. It was the special glory of the devout sodalist of Stonyhurst (as the writer who gives this account of Father Sisk calls him) and zealous priest of old St. Mary's, Chelsea, that he obtained permission, not perhaps without some fear and trembling on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities, to erect the first statue of God's Virgin Mother that had been seen in a Catholic church in London since the days of the Reformation.

The work of the Servite Fathers is easier now, and the prayer in the Liturgy, "Grant peace, O God, in our days, for there is none other that fighteth for us but Thou, our God," would seem to have been heard, for the very children of those who once afflicted the Church are fast becoming the corner-stone of the edifice, just as the father of Miss Agnew, the authoress of "Geraldine," admitted to be one of the ablest controversial novels, was one of the fiercest opponents of everything Catholic that ever lived. The ideal of life amongst the Servites was this, that it should be spent in contemplation, penance, and in the service

of God and the Blessed Virgin. Père Ledoux, therefore, as we might expect, in his history of the Order, dwells on the overwhelming nature of the evidence for the universal existence of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin in all the Eastern Churches which, like the Seven Churches mentioned in the Apocalypse, were either founded by the Apostles or by their immediate successors. Père Ledoux says: "We will briefly refer to the Orders first established and point out the particular links which united them to our Blessed Lady. First in the order of time come the monks of St. Basil and those of St. Antony, founded in the third and fourth centuries, differing indeed in their origin, but both living under the rule compiled by the great Bishop of Cesarea. All the members of the religious family of St. Basil were animated by the spirit of their holy patriarch, who bore to our Blessed Lady a love and veneration which he shared with his brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and which he bequeathed as a legacy to the many communities of men and women that sprang into existence throughout the East during his lifetime and after his death. Among his disciples St. Basil numbered both popes and bishops, whose writings are mines of theological science concerning the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and wherein are likewise to be found most glorious lyric outbursts in her praise. We need only name St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory Nazianzen (whose sermon has been already quoted), St. Epiphanius, St. John Chry-

sostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Ephraim, in fact an army of illustrious writers, in whose works the glories of Mary are celebrated with all the richness of Eastern eloquence."

CHAPTER XII.

Of course, one can understand Protestants questioning all Roman evidence, by this meaning all evidence derived not only from the Church but from the City of Rome itself, and saying it is Roman, that is quite enough to discredit it with us; and this is argument enough certainly with the average Protestant. How they manage, however, to dispose of the evidence of Constantinople is not quite so clear. The fact of Constantine so early as A.D. 324 founding the city and making Christianity the religion of the city and of the empire can hardly be gainsaid. The existence of St. John Chrysostom a century or so later is a formidable fact. Now the devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the veneration for her in the Constantinople of Constantine and of Chrysostom can be proved to the hilt. The frescoes, the paintings, and the mosaics in the Cathedral of St. Sophia, representing her and honouring her, still stare one in the face. The fact that later on the Greek Schism arose and existed for centuries, supported by emperors and patriarchs, both bitterly hostile to Rome and the Catholic Church, only makes the evidence of Constantinople with regard to the Blessed Virgin all the more crushing. Obliterated, to a great extent, in what is

now the Mosque of St. Sophia, as that evidence has been by the Moslems in their hatred of everything Christian, still, by what seems almost like a miracle, it is there. When Constantine marked out the Basilica of St. Sophia he had already proclaimed Christianity as the religion of the world in the Ulpian Basilica at Rome, in the Forum of Trajan. The apostles and prophets were portrayed under majestic forms on the walls of St. Sophia along with angels and archangels. Paintings of the Saviour and of the Virgin, which can still be traced, were introduced over the high altar. There were other paintings of saints and angels throughout the basilica, and the outlines of the Madonna, saints and angels can be still distinctly traced. In St. Sophia, as restored by Justinian in A.D. 548, effigies of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin and the Four Archangels in the spandrels of the dome looked down on the sanctuary. In that glorious shrine, erected by Constantine in the fourth century, and, as stated, restored by Justinian, the last Greek Emperor, Michael Palæologus, in 1453, received the Eucharist the morning before his death, which ended the Byzantine Empire, at the same altar and at the same shrine where the Crusaders had offered their thanksgivings. The circumstances of the re-opening of St. Sophia may be briefly stated. When this glorious basilica had been finished Justinian gave orders that an inscription in gigantic letters of gold should be affixed round the dome, "Justinian dedicates this church to

the glory of God." On the day of public opening the Emperor arrived, followed by the Patriarch and his whole Court, and took his seat on the golden throne on one side of the high altar, the Patriarch being on the other, a brazen eagle beside the Emperor, and the Labarum at his back—that Labarum, or sacred standard, copied from the vision in the sky of the cross of fire, seen by Constantine and by his whole army, with the inscription "In hoc signo vinces." The Labarum attested the faith of Constantine and of Christendom for a thousand years in the miracle. As proving that the Greek and other Eastern Churches knew nothing of the new lights vouchsafed to the Reformation with regard to the Blessed Virgin, it is recorded that when Michael Palæologus, at the siege of Constantinople by Mohammed II, had reached the Golden Gate, he dismounted from his horse and knelt before the image of the Virgin of the Blacherna which was carried before him, to signify that he placed himself under the protection of the Mother of God.

St. Sophia and the Palatium Sacrum adjoining were both originally constructed by Constantine. St. Sophia was twice injured by fire, but finally, as already mentioned, restored by Justinian, and as then restored, though converted into a mosque, it remains in its main features to this day. It was the first great Christian temple that was ever built, so that Justinian, when he first gazed at the completed and magnificent shrine, cried out in his exultant

joy, "Solomon, I have surpassed thee!" It is absurd, therefore, to decry the evidence afforded by it as to what Christianity then was, still more absurd to contend that within little over three centuries of the time of our Lord Christianity had in any of its main features ceased to exist, or, as the Coronation Oath asserts, had become idolatrous. What is the evidence of the Christianity of Constantine and of Chrysostom afforded by St. Sophia? Did they honour the Blessed Virgin as Catholics do now? The evidence is before us. Were they Catholics or Protestants? The evidence is before us.

British Christianity till recently was certainly *sui generis*, but there is a movement over the face of the waters—a great change is visible. England and its Protestantism is no longer confined to the four quarters of England. The empire is now world-wide, and Englishmen are walking over the earth. English Protestantism can now see itself—can see itself as others see it; can see, too, the Church which it thought in England it had destroyed. It sees something like a miracle—a resurrection—the body of the Church, like that of her Divine Spouse, brought back to life: brought back after her death-swoon of three hundred years. English Protestantism now sees and meets that Church everywhere—in Asia, in Africa, in America, as well as in England. It discovers the religion which it, the Reformed thing—considered and represented as the Deformed thing—to be

something altogether different; finds it alive, erect, and full of youthful vigour.

English Protestantism is looking and wondering at the spectacle—is looking also at itself. England has just witnessed within her borders two marvellous and beautiful lives which had attracted the attention of the world—the lives of Newman and of Manning. English Protestantism is questioning itself, is asking about these lives passed in its midst; is asking what was the constraining influence at work with those men when they left her. What was it that compelled these men, and such as they, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, to quit her? What was it? Was it grace? Was it God?

If instead of preconceived notions which are only a snare to them, Protestants really desire to get at the truth about the Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, if they wish to understand it as it is; if they desire to know in what spirit and for what object the Blessed Virgin is daily invoked, they can at once learn this from an authoritative source in the beautiful public prayers and offices of the Church. Take the "Little Office of the Blessed Virgin," the *Officium Parvum Beatæ Mariæ*, attributed to the Order of the Benedictines. One or two brief extracts will suffice. At the very beginning of the office, *Ad Matutinum*, in the 118th Psalm, we see clearly indicated the spirit in which Catholics and Protestants alike should approach the God of all Truth in the verse:

"Lex Domini immaculata convertens animas; testimonium Domini fidele, sapientiam præstans parvulis." Just as our Lord said, later: "Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Then the divine source of the aid sought through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin is clearly pointed out in the prayer: "Precibus et meritis beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis et omnium sanctorum, perducat nos Dominus ad regna cœlorum. Amen." Then is given the reason why we praise her, and the versicle refers that praise directly to her Divine Son: "Felix namque es, sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima. Quia ex te ortus est sol justitiæ, Christus Deus Noster." As does also the versicle: "Beata es Virgo Maria, quæ Dominum portasti Creatorem mundi, genuisti quæ te fecit, et in æternum permanes virgo." Then the prayer: "Per Virginem Matrem concedat nobis Dominus salutem et pacem," is addressed directly to God, only asking her intercession.

Even very brief reflection will show that the entire body of Catholic doctrine hangs together. The supreme act of worship offered up by Catholic Christians is sacrifice, offered by them as it was by the Jews to God alone. From the beginning of the world it has been always offered—Abel, Noe, Melchisedech, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have sacrificed to the Almighty. The sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, His atonement for sin, was consummated on Calvary. The same sacrifice is daily renewed in the

Mass ; Christ is still immolated upon the altar. The separate consecration of the two species mystically represents the shedding of His blood, and as a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech, He continues to the end of time the same unbloody sacrifice. "In every place there is sacrifice, and a pure victim is offered to My name" (Malac. i.). Protestants who have no sacrifice to offer, and offer none, cannot understand that the Catholic Church in offering up the sacrifice of the Mass makes at once and for ever this vital distinction between God and even the holiest of His creatures, His Virgin Mother, between the Creator and the creature.

The doctrine and the attitude of the Church are embodied in the language of her Liturgy. Whilst offering, as we do, to our Blessed Lady all the homage of our reverence, our veneration, and our love; whilst with the Archangel saluting her as "full of grace," and with the Council of Ephesus calling her unceasingly in our prayers by her sublime title of Mother of God ; yet the doctrine of the Church is declared clearly in her Liturgy, and we come to the bed-rock of that doctrine in the words of the *Te Deum*, addressed by the Church to her Divine spouse : "Tu rex gloriæ, Christe, Tu Patris sempiternus es filius. Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum."

The awful power and sanctity and majesty of the Godhead are ever present to Catholics, and

find continual expression in the public worship of the Church, as in the verse of the 94th Psalm, in the beginning of the Office of the Blessed Virgin: "Montes sicut cera fluxerunt a facie Domini, a facie Domini omnis terra." The standing miracle of the Eucharist helps Catholics to realise and remember the presence of God. If Protestants would reflect on the nature and obligation of sacrifice, if they would look at it for a moment as Catholics do, they would see the entire question—at least from the Catholic standpoint—more clearly. The conspicuous virtue of the Blessed Virgin, the virtue to which in her inspired Canticle, the Magnificat, she said the Almighty had "had regard," was her humility. In her example of this virtue was the grand lesson of her life, a lesson which Protestants sometimes scarcely seem to appreciate, and yet for them it has its special significance. Challoner has pointed out that "Faith which is commonly looked on as the foundation of all our good, absolutely depends upon humility—even that humility which obliges the soul to adore what she cannot understand, to submit to the most humbling truths, and, in the words of St. Paul, to 'cast down every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every understanding to the obedience of Christ'" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). Miracles and miraculous utterances attended her every step—her humility received Divine recognition, and the inspired warning of Simeon foretold her anguish. The "Stabat Mater" is known

to most Protestants, and its mournful beauty has touched many a heart. Perhaps no one has given a more touching picture of the sorrowful Mother, of the Mater Dolorosa, of Da Todi's "Stabat Mater," than Aubrey de Vere in his beautiful version of that hymn :—

By the Cross of expiation
The Mother stood, and kept her station,
Weeping for her Son and Lord :
With the nails His hands were riven ;
Through her heart the sword was driven—
Simeon's dread predicted sword.

Oh, that blessed one, grief-laden,
Blessed Mother, blessed Maiden,
Mother of the All-Holy One ;
Oh, that silent, ceaseless mourning,
Oh, those dim eyes never turning
From that suffering, wondrous Son.

Who is he of nature human
Tearless that could watch that woman ?
Hear unmoved that Mother moan ?
Who, unchanged in shape and colour,
Who could mark that Mother's dolour,
Weeping with her Son alone ?

For His people's sins the All-Holy
There she saw, a victim lowly,
Bleed in torments, bleed and die :
Saw the Lord's Anointed taken ;
Saw her Child in death forsaken ;
Heard His last expiring cry.

Fount of love and sacred sorrow,
Mother, may my spirit borrow
Sadness from thy holy woe ;
May it love—on fire within me—
Christ, my God, till great love win me
Grace to please Him here below.

The mind of the Church has been always manifested in the action of her pontiffs; and we see pope after pope finding means to keep the devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the quickening of the faithful in her intercession ever before the Catholic world. Two notable instances of this occurred at the beginning of the pontificate of Gregory IX (date of accession, A.D. 1227). That Pontiff was very zealous in this respect, and to him we owe two invocations now universal—firstly the Angelus, which he ordered the faithful to recite thrice daily at the sound of the bell, at daybreak, at noon, and at sunset, in order continually to recall the great Mystery of the Incarnation of the God-man, of which the Blessed Virgin was the willing instrument; and secondly by the Salve Regina, admitted by him among the liturgical prayers of the Church. The pious and learned Hermann Contractus, Count of Veringen, who died in the year 1054, is regarded as the author of the Salve Regina. This favourite prayer of St. Bernard, it has been well said, is so beautiful, so touching, so well suited to the poor banished children of Eve, pilgrims in this valley of tears, that it is difficult to repeat it without having our hearts moved, and without also moving the most tender and compassionate heart of Mary.

The writer just quoted, Gaume, in referring to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, says: "This Litany is also called the Litany of our Lady of Loreto, where it is sung with great pomp on every Saturday of the year. This

Litany, which most Catholics know by heart, is most venerable by the beauty of its petitions; by the titles, at once so gracious and so affecting, which it bestows on the Holy Virgin; by the devotion with which so many pontiffs, kings, and scholars in every clime have employed it in their addresses to Mary; finally, by its antiquity.

The tradition in Rome of the origin of the "Regina Cœli laetare, alleluia," as given by Mr. Hemans in his "Historic and Monumental Rome," has been already quoted. The Abbé Gaume's account is similar; he writes: "The 'Regina Cœli' was commenced by angels and completed by Pope St. Gregory the Great and the people of Rome on Easter Day, April 25th, in the year 590, at the time of a terrible pestilence which was desolating the capital of the Christian world, and which ceased immediately."

With reference to the other beautiful liturgical hymn, "Ave Maris Stella," a remarkable incident occurred in the Servite Order. The Pope, Alexander IV, had just granted indisputable authority to the Father-General, and at the same time had defined the constitution of the Order. The messenger who brought the good news to Monte Senario was hastening to reach the Convent. It was on a Saturday, and the community was gathered before the statue of the Blessed Virgin reciting the prayers appointed for the needs of the Order. Just as the line in the "Ave Maris Stella," "Monstra te esse Matrem" (show thyself a mother), was being

sung, the bearer of the glad tidings crossed the threshold of the church. In order to perpetuate the remembrance of this striking coincidence, it was at once resolved that in future this line should always be repeated by both sides of the choir, and this has been done for nearly seven hundred years.

The same marked devotion to the Blessed Virgin which has distinguished his predecessors was eminently characteristic of the late illustrious pontiff, Leo. XIII. It may be first premised how remarkable was Leo XIII's attitude to England and to Englishmen, as will be seen from his own utterances to be just quoted. There seemed to be something almost personal in this leaning, or attrait; it was so marked, so much so, that there were various surmises as to its origin, one being that he had been strongly attracted by certain Englishmen whom he had known; much as Gladstone was by Sydney Herbert, by reason—to use his own words—"of his tall and graceful figure, surmounted by a face of such singular sweetness and refinement that my attention was at once rivetted to it." Certain it is that the hold England had on him was a feature of his life. In no one of the long line of pontiffs since St. Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to England has it been more marked. In 1895, immediately after Easter, he astonished Great Britain and, indeed, Europe, by addressing an encyclical letter "ad Anglos," departing in this from the customary form in which such letters had been hitherto couched;

and not very long before his death he gave utterance to the following words: "I want to go on living that I may see the resurrection of the Church." Then, putting his hands together, and making them meet on his breast he added: "As it is, England is coming back to me." It will be now seen how fervent and unceasing was his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Leo XIII issued an annual encyclical on the Rosary, urging all Catholics to zeal in the practice of this devotion. Another, and one of the most impassioned of his encyclicals was that enjoining the faithful throughout the world to seek the protection of St. Joseph and of the Holy Virgin because "of the difficulties of the present time." The late pontiff also did what has been rarely done—he made an addition to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. In an impressive address he informed the faithful that in moments of anxiety and of difficulty he had ever had recourse, and with fruit, to the "Mother of good counsel," and he thereupon enjoined all Catholics in future when saying the Litany to add after the title "Mater admirabilis" that of "Mater boni consilii." Is it not a wonderful thing in this age of boasted rationalism that when a simple direction of this old man, but sealed with the "Fisherman's ring," is proclaimed it goes forth "urbi et orbi"? A world listens to his voice, and that voice will be obeyed to the ends of the earth, not only by the generation which heard it, but for all time. As long as the world will last and as "all generations shall call

her blessed" will she also by the command of the Pontiff be saluted in her Litany as the "Mother of Good Counsel." She will be thus saluted by those who have forgotten or have never known by what pope or under what circumstances the title was given. Portions, no doubt, of the Litany have had a similar origin. The recent beautiful prayer of our present saintly Pontiff in placing the Universal Church under the protection of the "Immaculate Virgin" is too well known to be here more than alluded to. Whether Leo XIII knew that Cardinal Sarto had this ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin, in common with himself, is not material, but his prescience with regard to his successor was, indeed, remarkable, calling him the Candidato della Serenissima, and, as the Rome correspondent of the *Morning Post* in his account described it: "In the course of a recent visit to the Vatican, Cardinal Sarto chanced to speak to Leo XIII of the respect and veneration which the Venetians felt towards him, adding that nowhere more than in Venice were wishes entertained for his health and happiness. "Alas," replied Leo XIII, "we have at times a presentiment which warns us that we must shortly answer the call of the Lord; but it will be without the slightest regret that we shall bequeath to a less unworthy creature the crushing honour of representing the divine authority on this earth. Moreover," he added "you may perhaps succeed us." Cardinal Sarto received this unexpected compliment with astonishment, and,

as he protested, assuring the Pope that such a burden would be beyond his strength, Leo XIII added : "We know, my son, that you would be in a position to render great services to the Church, for you possess qualities which would render you precious to her." It is surely significant that almost the first act of the new pontiff was in his solemn and beautiful prayer to place himself and the Church under the special protection of the immaculate Virgin Mother of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Rosary commemorates the principal mysteries of man's redemption; and yet this is the devotion which many Protestants attack and think they dispose of by mocking at what they call "vain repetitions." Vain repetitions! The criticism is a strange one in the mouth of a Christian; vain repetitions, forsooth, of prayers which have a Divine source, the one, the "Our Father," coming from the lips of our Lord Himself, and the other, the "Hail, Mary!" inspired by the Holy Ghost. Catholics know well that to pray with wilful distractions is a mockery and affronts the majesty of Heaven, and that there are prayers, as the Scriptures tell us, which are not heard. "This people draweth near Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from me" (Isaias xxix. 13). But the Apostles themselves asked for guidance in prayer, saying, "Lord, teach us how to pray." No one, however, has a right to impute to another wilful distraction, or that his heart is far from God, simply because he is repeating the Lord's Prayer. It is frequently observed of holy children how often they say these two prayers of the Rosary. One such child, when spoken to about it, answered: "Oh yes, I must say to our dear Lord His own prayer, and

then to our Lady what the angel said to her." In those virgin souls, who in childhood and early youth have given themselves to God, and have had the grace of a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, there is often something wonderfully attractive; there is an atmosphere about them; there is often a fragrant beauty which is felt by all around them. Anyone who has been privileged to meet such a case once or twice in a lifetime can never forget it. Sometimes in a family of sisters there is one who attracts all the rest, whether in joy or in sorrow; they seem instinctively to turn to her; why, perhaps at first they can hardly tell. She is quite unconscious of her attraction herself. Gradually, however, the cause unfolds itself—she is leading a supernatural life: she is living in the presence of God and of His Blessed Mother. All become conscious of this in a dim sort of way; for in the beginning there seems nothing remarkable about her, but presently they see it in a clearer light. It is not always mere beauty of face or of form; that may be present, but it may not; she may be plain, but the attraction is there. What is it? Catholics know that it is grace, the grace of God which has claimed one of its specially-chosen vessels for its own. Heaven has lent this chosen one, whom it often calls back so soon, something of its own beauty. The hidden charm of the life, for it is nearly always hidden, ends by transforming the very face. The beautiful soul comes out in the eyes. If

in a room it should happen that strangers to her are present, they often say, "What a sweet face that girl has!" Not "What a beautiful face!" for what they recognise is something far higher than beauty.

The writer knew of one such case, a young girl who died in extreme youth. A German lady, not a Catholic, who did not know her, but who happened to go occasionally to the church for early Mass at which she communicated, observed her, and told her friends that her look, coming from the altar after receiving Communion, was simply angelic. The last year of her life she was preparing for the devotion of the *Quarant 'Ore* before the Feast of the Assumption, according to her custom, when the call came; and as she lay dying, she was heard to murmur, "I hear sweet music." Some one of those present made perhaps unconsciously, a sort of gesture of dissent, which the dying girl must have observed, for she said again, "Oh, yes I do; I hear sweet music." The writer mentioned this incident afterwards to a religious, and he answered: "That is quite true; it happens very rarely, but it has happened amongst some of the holiest of our religious." If one of those beautiful spirits should happen, like Eugénie de Guérin, to be a well-known writer, then the attraction felt ordinarily only by relatives and friends extends to a far wider circle, becomes universal, and an entire world gets to know, to love, and to admire. The secret of lives like Eugénie de

Guérin's is that they live for God and for others, and for this they have their reward even here: such happiness as is to be got here below they certainly get, and hereafter "their exceeding great reward."

The Eugénie de Guérins avoid, and help others to avoid, the pitfalls which crowd on every path. In one of her letters she writes: "I have scarcely read the author whose works you sent, though I admired him as I do M. Hugo, but these geniuses have blemishes which wound a woman's eye. I detest to meet with what I do not wish to see; and this makes me close so many books. I have had 'Notre Dame de Paris' under my hands a hundred times to-day; and the style, Esmeralda, and so many pretty things in it, tempt me and say to me, 'Read—look.' I looked, I turned it over, but the stains here and there stopped me. I read no more, and contented myself with looking at the pictures." At another time, when on a visit at what she calls "a deserted house"—a dull one, it may be presumed—she writes: "The devil tempted me just now in a little room, where I found a number of romances. 'Read a word,' he said to me; 'let us see that,' 'look at this': but the titles of the books displeased me. I am no longer tempted now, and will go only to change the books in this room, or rather to throw them into the fire."

When suffering she wrote:—

A l'enfant il faut sa mère
A mon âme il faut mon Dieu.

God only can console us when the heart is sorrowful; human helps are not enough; they sink beneath it; it is so weighed down by sorrow. The reed must have more than other reeds to lean upon. Need we be surprised that a pure soul like Eugénie de Guérin's—a soul, to use her own expression about others, "white as snow"—was irresistibly drawn to the Blessed Virgin. She writes: "On this day, at this moment, my holy Mimi"—a pet name for her sister—"is on her knees before the little altar for the month of Mary in my room. Dear sister, I join myself to her, and find a chapel here also. They have given me for this purpose a room filled with flowers; in it I have made a church, and Marie with her little girls, servants, shepherds, and all the household assemble together every evening before the Blessed Virgin. They came at first only to look on, for they had never kept the month of Mary (May) before. Some good will result to them of this new devotion, if it is only one idea, a single idea of their Christian duties, which these people know so little of, and which we can teach them while amusing them. These popular devotions please me so, because they are so attractive in their form, and thereby offer such an easy method of instruction. By their means salutary truths appear most pleasing, and all hearts are gained in the name of our Lady, and of her sweet virtues. I love the month of Mary and the other little devotions which the Church permits, which she blesses, which are

born at the feet of the Faith like flowers at the mountain foot." Speaking of St. Teresa, to whom she had a great devotion, she says: "I am pleased to remember that when I lost my mother I went, like St. Teresa, to throw myself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, and begged her to take me for her daughter."

A noteworthy event in the history of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, was the publication of the Bull "Ineffabilis" by Pope Pius IX in 1854, declaring the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin to be *de fide*. The Jubilee of this definition was celebrated by the present pontiff, Pius X, in the first year of his pontificate, when he placed himself and the whole Church under the special protection of Mary Immaculate. If, as Ruskin has told us, "to the ordinary Protestant mind the dignities ascribed to the Madonna have always been a violent offence," the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has been in the forefront of these offences. Catholics, however, need not be impatient with Protestants for not at once understanding what even doctors of the Church like St. Bernard did not clearly apprehend, and which has only recently been defined and declared as a dogma. All we can ask them is not wilfully to misapprehend or misrepresent that doctrine. It was at the very instant of the infusing of the soul that Mary, according to the definition of the Bull "Ineffabilis," was "by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, preserved

exempt from all stain of original sin." If the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception appears especially difficult to Protestants, it is to be feared that one reason is they do not seek to understand it. If a Protestant is able to believe that the soul of Adam or Eve was created innocent and free from stain, he is surely able to accept that the soul of the Virgin Mother of God was created equally so. The honour of her Divine Son and that of His Blessed Mother are equally concerned in the doctrine always held by the Church and at last defined and declared to be *de fide*. If Anglicans would reflect on the visitation of the Blessed Virgin to St. Elizabeth—that visitation so full of mysteries—and how at the first voice of the Mother of God, by the all-powerful grace of Him whom she bears in her womb, the Baptist is immediately cleansed from original sin, this reflection would help them to understand the Immaculate Conception. The Gospel narrative (Luke i. 39, etc.) is: "Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda; and she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she cried with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy saluta-

tion sounded in my ears the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." As we have just read, John the Baptist was immediately cleansed from original sin. If St. John, who was only the forerunner of our Lord, was cleansed from original sin before he was born, is there anything remarkable in the fact that the Blessed Virgin whom St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, saluted as "the Mother of my Lord," should *ab initio* be preserved and free from original sin. Surely it is as easy to believe that the soul of the Blessed Virgin was sanctified at the very instant of its creation as it is to believe that John the Baptist was sanctified and freed from original sin before he was born.

If the Angel Gabriel, in announcing the tremendous mystery of the Incarnation, declared and explained it to the Blessed Virgin in saying, "Because no word shall be impossible with God," surely these same words can be equally applied to the Immaculate Conception; just as St. Bernard, in speaking of the Incarnation, and as if addressing the Blessed Virgin, expressly says: "Ask the angel, then, and hear what the angel himself has to say. Because no word shall be impossible with God."

Those Anglicans who doubt and yet act in good faith with regard to the Immaculate Conception, should remember those words—

words inspired by the Holy Ghost and addressed to the Blessed Virgin in that other tremendous grace conferred on her at the Incarnation—should take heed whether in their case there is any wilful misrepresentation, whether of the Blessed Virgin or of the doctrine; for if so they will not be justified. The warning of St. Bernard, already quoted here, again applies when he wrote: "For the words of such tongues are not for Him, but against Him, even as the law-giver said to them that murmured, 'Your murmuring is not against us but against the Lord'" (Exod. xvi. 8).

One incident connected with the promulgation of the Immaculate Conception the writer well remembers, although he was too young at the time to understand its full significance. On that December morning which "kings and prophets had desired to see, but never saw," when the proclamation of the dogma was received by the entire Catholic world with acclamation and sounds of jubilee, there were at the great Catholic college at which he was educated illuminations, firing of cannon, and other signs of joy; but perhaps the sign which was dearest to the heart of our Lady were the tears of joy which flowed down the cheeks of one of the holiest of our priests. It is not a little remarkable that ever since the Reformation all sorts and conditions of men in the literary world would seem to have felt themselves constrained to attack the Catholic Church and one or more of its doctrines. Philosophers

scientists, historians, biographers, poets, novelists, no matter what their special subject might be, have all wandered from it to join in the attack. It seemed as if they couldn't help themselves—as if they were simply obeying a law of their being. Even the mild and philosophic Newton had to obey this peculiar Protestant law of gravitation, and to fall down on "the milk-white hind" which

> Immortal and unchanged,
> Oft chased with horns and hounds
> And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
> Aimed at her heart, was often forced to fly,
> And doomed to death, though fated not to die.

Dryden, though he too when a Protestant had struck at "the milk-white hind," eventually wrote:—

> What weight of ancient witness can prevail
> If private reason hold the public scale?
> But, gracious God! how well dost Thou provide
> For erring judgments an unerring guide!
> Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
> A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
> Oh, teach me to believe Thee thus concealed
> And search no further than Thyself revealed;
> But her alone for my director take
> Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake!
> My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires,
> My manhood long misled by wandering fires
> Followed false lights, and, when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I, such by nature still I am;
> Be Thine the glory and be mine the shame.
> Good life be now my task: my doubts are done,
> What more could fright my faith than Three in One?

Can I believe Eternal God would lie
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy?
That the Maker of the world could die?
And, after that, trust my imperfect sense,
Which calls in question His omnipotence?

The miraculous manifestations at Lourdes and elsewhere form a favourite object of attack. But those who ridicule modern miracles should remember the wonders of the Gospel New Testament. They should remember that our Lord's answer to John the Baptist when asked whether he was the Messiah was, "Tell him that the Gospel was preached to the poor, that the blind saw, the deaf heard, and the lame walked." And he said later to the Apostles, "These things also, if ye have faith ye also shall do, and greater than these." Still later came the fulfilment of this promise, when miraculous cures were wrought by the very shadow of St. Peter, and by the handkerchiefs which had touched St. Paul. Were the Jews who were the subjects of these miracles delivered over to puerile superstitions? If in a given case of cancer, consumption, or hip disease, a French or English specialist of Paris or London has certified that he thoroughly knows the case—knows it to be beyond the reach of medical skill—and if the afflicted person in his anguish of mind and body goes to Lourdes and is cured there, where is the superstition in believing what the physicians and the facts alike avouch? The man who is cured believes in his cure, and so do those who have witnessed it.

The puerility and the superstition here, as well as the falsehood, consist in trying to ignore the facts and to deny the miracle. If the miracles at Lourdes are true miracles, then the Church can take up the self-same position which her Divine Founder took up, and appeal to them as proofs of her mission. Those who have been cured at Lourdes, when all other means had failed, persist in believing they were cured, just as there are Protestants at this moment in different parts of England who have gone to St. Winifred's Well, in Wales, and will actually tell you that they have been cured there.

The Curé of Ars, of whom Cardinal Manning and all who ever looked on his face believed that he was spiritually illumined, solemnly warned the people of France that unless there was a great change soon, the faith might be taken from them and given to another people. What other people? Was it England that was in the seer's vision? Perhaps! Yet England has her own dangers, not only of never becoming Catholic but even of ceasing to be Christian. A Parliamentary Blue Book not so many years ago revealed the astonishing fact that parts of England had, by different routes, arrived at much the same bourne as the infidel French soldiers, and had never heard of God. In one of the great coal mines in the north of England, a miner being asked about the Almighty answered: "I don't know un, I know nowt about him"; and being further questioned about Jesus Christ, replied, "There be no one of that name in our works." The

Reformers, in banishing the Blessed Virgin, banished much besides, and would have been scarcely prepared for the fact that the time would come in England when men would ask who was her Divine Son. An incident like this of the miner would have been impossible in the England of Henry VIII. No part of the population had then ceased to be Christian, and yet England had been Catholic and the Church had held the field for a thousand years. In the England of Catholic times, all England knew something of our Lord, something, too, of His Blessed Mother. The question now is, are the English people in a state of mind to look fairly at the religion which once was theirs—at Catholicism as it is and not as it is not—not as it has been and is misrepresented to them? They have had three centuries of the Reformation, what have they out of it? Have they religion? Have they faith? Have they to-day even the residuum of faith the Reformation left them? Gladstone made it a reproach to Mathew Arnold and said of him, "His patronage of a Christianity fashioned by himself is to me more offensive and trying than rank unbelief." But really is not Gladstone too severe? Did Arnold's method differ so much from that of the great mass of his countrymen? Mr. Gladstone thought that in Arnold's case private judgment had run riot and had ended in something worse than "rank unbelief." What is the meaning of the restlessness which is now like a consuming fire running through the world? The world that is Christian and the world that is not,

may not become Catholic, but it is beginning to realize that outside the Catholic Church there is no reality, no soundness, no resting-place for the soul of man.

England may, for all she knows, be at the parting of the ways. A great part of France and of Germany has ceased to be Christian. Is England in any danger?

CHAPTER XIV.

When Christianity was introduced into England, what was the faith then preached? What did Bede believe? If what Bede believed coincides with the Catholic doctrine of to-day and not with Protestantism in any of its forms, to what conclusion must we come? If the Protestant theory that the faith even in Bede's time had become corrupt be accepted, then the Reformation should have begun in Bede's time. The whole question may be put in the form of interrogatories :—

Was Christianity ever introduced? Was it ever pure and free from error as it came from the hands of its Divine Founder? If so, what doctrines constituted its belief? Is there any evidence what those doctrines were? Is the evidence of the identity of the Faith of Christendom at the time of the Reformation with that now held by the Catholic Church simply overwhelming proved at once by the Protestants who protested against and rejected it and by the Catholics who retained it? If there were errors and corruptions, they were the errors and corruptions not of Rome but of Christendom, and the promise of the Divine Founder of Christianity had not been fulfilled. But this contention is as absurd as it is blasphemous. The promise was kept and the

Faith was kept. The chain of evidence that it was so kept is complete, rivetted in its every link not more by the testimony of the Fathers from St. Polycarp to St. Bernard than by the evidence of every church in Christendom, whether of Asia, of Africa, or of Europe. The late Duke of Argyle, in referring to Montalembert's "Les Moines de l'Occident," produces interesting evidence on this point. In his work on Iona, and writing of the age of St. Columba, the second half of the sixth century, the Duke says: "Montalembert boasts, and I think with truth, that in Columba's life we have proof of the practice of auricular confession, of the invocation of saints, of confidence in their protection, of belief in transubstantiation, of the practices of fasting and of penance, of prayer for the dead, of the sign of the Cross in familiar and, it must be added, in most superstitious use. On the other hand, there is no symptom of the worship or 'cultus' of the Virgin, and not even an allusion to such an idea as the universal Bishopric of Rome, or to any special authority as seated there." The Duke of Argyle by these admissions may be said to have given away Protestantism as being simply non-existent in the sixth century, in the days of St. Columba and of venerable Bede. Of course we have his assertion about the Blessed Virgin, and he does not see that the "cultus," as he calls it, is included in the "practice of the invocation of saints," which he admits. This contention, however, can be dealt with more conveniently

a little later, when it will be seen that the researches of recent Gaelic scholars in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, and the Outer Hebrides, the latter having admittedly got the faith from Columba and from Ireland, dispose of this point. In these days we have got a long way from the simple and primitive faith of a Columba, a long way from the superstition which troubles the Duke of Argyle. The beliefs of men, however, have taken a darker and a more dangerous form. Amongst those now rejecting Christianity, there is no longer any superstitious use of the sign of the Cross —there is no use of it at all, but on the other hand we have got back to something very like the Pagan practices and beliefs denounced by St. Paul. Simon Magus, as we learn in the Scriptures, had faith of a kind—faith in the god Mammon; he wanted to buy of the apostle Peter the grace to give the Holy Spirit. Then we have seen how the seven sons of the Jewish priest Sceva, who wandered about from place to place, professing to eject demons, thought if they could combine the Pagan charms which they had been accustomed to use with the names of the Saviour and of St. Paul, they would succeed like St. Paul in driving out the evil spirits from those possessed, who at that time, it is evident, were very numerous. We further learn the result of this scheme and the answer of the man possessed: "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?" and that thereupon he attacked them with the greatest

fury, tearing the clothes from their backs and leaving them half dead. Possession, if it exists at all, is now of rare occurrence, but spiritualism we know—spiritualism with its table-turning and spirit-rapping and all their attendant horrors, reason tottering on its throne, often ending in absolute insanity. There is a wide distinction between the methods of the sons of Sceva and spiritualism, and yet there is a dreadful likeness. They wanted to meddle with and deal with possession; spiritualism is itself dangerously near possession. The object of Home, the spiritualist, would seem to have been, unlike that of the sons of Sceva, not so much the driving out of evil spirits as the getting them in. Home attracted widespread attention, not only amongst the Scotch peasants amongst whom he was born, but amongst all sorts and conditions of men, including the French Emperor, the third Napoleon, who sought an interview with him. The writer happened to be in the same hotel at Nice with Home, and weird and strange to the last degree he undoubtedly was, with—as his countrymen would say—something uncanny about him. Physically he was perhaps not very unlike Carlyle—the same high cheek-bones, the same rugged features, the same hair of the dead colour of straw.

The story here given, hitherto unpublished, was told to the writer in Rome by a clergyman who had it from the lips of the famous French preacher, Père de Ravignan, who a couple of

decades before in Paris had given his celebrated Conferences in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. All Paris was crowding to hear him, and amongst others, Home, who happened to be in Paris at the time, went night after night. He eventually sought out Père de Ravignan, had frequent conversations with him on the subject of religion, and finally asked to be received into the Catholic Church. Père de Ravignan had misgivings, but eventually yielding to Mr. Home's reiterated entreaties, received him into the Church, first exacting a solemn promise from him that he would for ever give up the communications which he alleged he had with the spirit world. On this condition he was received. Not very long after this Père de Ravignan met him again, and asked him if he had been faithful to his promise, and Home answered that he had not, adding at once, however, that he couldn't help himself. Father de Ravignan naturally asked what did he mean? Home answered "Listen, and you will understand what I mean." Père de Ravignan declared that immediately there arose all around them the most unearthly and frightful sounds. Thereupon Home said, "You see now, Father, why I couldn't keep my promise—these sounds have pursued me and never leave me." Père de Ravignan never saw him again. What was the exact nature of this awful visitation to which Home was subject, how far he was originally responsible for it and whether it resembled possession we know not, but we can imagine

one of these evil spirits such as possessed the man whom the sons of the Jewish priest Sceva tried to exorcise, one of those spirits which, in spite of all the efforts of men to come up with them, are so much more evil than they are, and know so much more than they know, whose knowledge is in proportion to their evil and their evil in proportion to their knowledge—we can imagine one of these spirits addressing the Geneva of Calvin, or the Edinburgh of Knox, the Wittenberg of Luther, or the London of Cranmer and Henry VIII and saying "The Constantinople of Constantine and St. Helena we know, the Ephesus of St. John we know, Smyrna we know, Alexandria we know, Rome we know, but who are you?"

It may be well here to recall for a moment to the reader the real nature of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin as briefly and admirably given by Dr. Challoner, the saintly bishop who, leaving Douai in 1730, spent over fifty years on the London Mission. Writing of the "super-eminent sanctity" of the Blessed Virgin, based on the text "Hail, full of grace!" (Luke i. 28) he says: "That as God is the sole author and original source of all the dignity, sanctity, and glory which we honour in the Blessed Virgin, so all that veneration which the Catholic Church pays to this Blessed Lady has God both for its beginning and its end. Our devotion to her proceeds from the love we bear her Son; we honour in her His gifts and graces; we love and honour her for His sake, and all the extra-

ordinary respect we at any time show to her, we refer to His greater glory. So far, then, from robbing God of any part of His honour, by the veneration we give her, we honour Him indeed, so much the more, because all this our devotion finally tends to Him, and terminates in Him. And thus we always find that such as are truly devout to the Blessed Virgin fail not to be also true lovers of God and pursuers of all good works."

To return to the Duke of Argyle's assertion with reference to the superstitious use of the sign of the cross and the "cultus of the Virgin" in the Iona of St. Columba, the Duke does not explain what he means by superstitious use. Tertullian, writing in the second century, tells us that the sign of the cross was in constant use in the first and second centuries amongst all Christians and on all occasions, before meals and after them, going out of the house and returning to it, setting out on a journey and coming back from it. Is this the sort of use the Duke would call superstitious? He gives no information. A Catholic clergyman, just deceased, who was, perhaps, the most distinguished Gaelic scholar and linguist of his generation, in an account of his "Travels in the Highlands of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides," just published in a Celtic monthly—*The Gael*, of New York—throws much light on the two points raised by the Duke, although quite unaware of his strictures. The writer gives much curious information of how the Faith has been

preserved in the Highlands, and quite a picture of the little village of Strathglass, near Balmoral, which may be regarded as a sort of ecclesiastical Pompei, shut off and hidden from the rest of the world, and where the whole body of Catholic doctrine, the devotion to the Blessed Virgin included, has been handed down from father to son, just as it had been received from St. Columba and his monks. The writer tells us: "A learned Presbyterian Highlander asked him to translate an ancient rhythmic prayer, which brings back the days when Scotland and Ireland, the east and the west, formed one Gaelic nation, with the same race, language and religion. It is strange," the writer says, "to find this little Communion hymn remembered in the Highlands after so many dark centuries, during which the old faith was proscribed in Ireland. The hymn is still in use in the beautiful Catholic valley of Strathglass, and is still recited by the Highlanders approaching Holy Communion. The prayer was noted down from the lips of a little child on the 21st January, 1893." The writer then adds, "For the benefit of many who will be interested in the original, we give both the original Gaelic words as well as a translation." The hymn is really so beautiful and so unlike any other, that as it is short the translation may perhaps be inserted.

PRAYER OF THE SACRAMENT.

My Love, I go before Thy face,
God of mercy, God of grace;

God of might and God of power
Hear me, for Christ's sake, this hour,
Hold me fast in Thine embrace.

Hail! Body of Christ.
Hail! Wondrous King.
Hail! Sacred Divinity.
Hail! Flesh and Blood.
Hail! Source of Graces.
Hail! True Humanity.

Since to come it pleaseth Thee,
In form of Bread, O Christ, to me,
That I might not eat in vain;
Cleanse my soul from every stain,
May it at death and now be free.

O Sacred Trinity! without beginning or end,
No more may Thy wrath on me descend;
Bathe my soul in Christ's precious blood,
Hail to Thee, both Man and God.

As bearing on what the Duke of Argyle says about the sign of the cross, we learn: "In the Highlands, Presbyterians make the sign of the cross over a wound, though in ordinary life they would never use so Catholic a practice."

Then, with reference to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, this writer contrasts the modern modes of salutation with those of the ages of Faith—the "How do you do?" "Hello! there you are," and the "Good-day," with those in use to this day in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland of "God and Mary bless thee;" of, in Gartan, Co. Donegal, St. Columba's birthplace, the "God, Mary and Colum to thee;" and in both countries "God guard thy life," and the answer, "Mayst thou live!" which corresponds to "Health and Benediction," used in letters.

A most usual name for our Lord is the Son

of Mary; and we learn there can be no higher tribute to St. Bridgett of Gaelic writers than calling her "the Mary of the Gael." Gaelic is the only language in the world that has two names for Mary—one, Muire, is restricted to the Mother of God; the other, Maura, is given to all other women."

If Protestants could bring themselves even once to look at a pietà—say the pietà of Michel Angelo—as Catholics look at it, would try to realise as Catholics do the Mater Dolorosa at the foot of the Cross receiving the body of her Divine Son into her arms—taking the thorns out of His head, the nails out of His hands and feet, the splinters of the wood of the Cross out of the gaping wound in His shoulder, they would understand the secret of Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and how it is that Catholics find that thinking of the Mother brings them nearer to the Son. But if any one would realise the Crucifixion—would realise what His redemption cost, and what the Blessed Virgin did and suffered for mankind, in a way which no pietà, no painting, has ever approached, let him go to Oberammergau. In the pietàs of Michel Angelo we have the conceptions of that mighty genius; but genius though he was, he was working with marble—with stone; but at Oberammergau we have inspiration working with flesh and blood. At Oberammergau the whole scene of the Crucifixion rises up before us—we see it, we see the living representative of the Christus; we seem

to see the Christus Himself as He slowly moves His eyes and fixes them first on the good thief and then on the Blessed Virgin and St. John. The effect is simply indescribable; the heart seems to cease to beat, and for a moment one almost feels as if that awful agony—that dread Sacrifice—were passing before his eyes. The way in which the Crucifixion is brought home to one is something wonderful—the body pinioned and crucified, an inert mass, the eyes alone moving, as He addresses the good thief and then the Blessed Virgin and St. John. The whole scene leaves an indelible impression on the heart and memory. One can never forget the eager look of the good thief as he heard himself addressed and drank in the Divine promise of forgiveness, salvation, and paradise, his eyes and face lit up as if with the conviction that as he had been with Him on the Cross, was penitent and had put his whole trust in Him, his prayer was heard of "being remembered in His Kingdom." Again, when the Christus fixed His eyes on the Blessed Virgin and St. John, saying: "Woman, behold thy Son; Son, behold thy Mother," and they seemed instinctively, though but for a moment, to avert their eyes from Him and to look at each other, one realised our Lord forgetting His own awful agony to comfort them, and then His human nature giving way and finding expression in the words: "My God! My God! why hast Thou abandoned Me?"

After the first words the tension became

extreme, the listening and the waiting of the Blessed Virgin and St. John for the next words were almost felt, and the sound of His voice from the Cross seemed to have an inconceivable effect on them both. One realised vividly how, as the Virgin Mother was losing Him, He gave her for her solace and support His beloved disciple, and that in the eyes of St. John there was the promise that he accepted the charge committed to him; one felt, too, how the consciousness of that divinely appointed solace and support strengthened the Blessed Virgin, and how our Lord intended that solace and support to commence from that very hour, as it undoubtedly did.

If any one wishes to realise both the past and the present—if any one wants to forget this world and to think of the next, let him go to Oberammergau. There the Old Testament and the New, with all their thronging figures, alike arise before us. We see the saints of the old law, those special servants and friends of God the Patriarchs of old, not mere abstractions, not mere shadows, but flesh and blood. We see Abraham, we realise that special gift of his —of living in the presence of God and walking before Him; we see Isaac going out into the fields to pray, as if he felt that there, with the heavens above him, he could best commune with his God. We witness the joy of Jacob and Joseph, father and son separated for a lifetime, at last locked in each other's arms.

The "Stabat Mater" should have been

written for or in Oberammergau; there, as nowhere else, can the very spirit of it, its pathos and melody, its mournful beauty, be realised—there alone does it take possession of one.

> "O quam tristis et afflicta
> Fuit illa benedicta
> Mater Unigeniti!
> Quae moerebat, et dolebat
> Pia Mater dum videbat
> Nati poenas inclyti.
> Quis est homo, qui non fleret
> Matrem Christi si videret
> In tanto supplicio?"

At Oberammergau the whole tremendous mystery of man's redemption is realised, the life and death of our Lord are both brought vividly before us. Just as in the Gospel narrative we have the description of the death of our Saviour, so in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Eight Beatitudes we have a picture of His life, drawn by our Lord Himself: "He was meek, merciful, poor in spirit, clean of heart, a peacemaker, a mourner, hungering and thirsting after justice, suffering persecution for justice sake."

What a life and what a death! How they revolutionise or should revolutionise, all our ideas of life. Mary shared our Saviour's life, just as in a manner she shared His death, shared His agony; that is, for thirty years she witnessed that perfect life—shared it; was a part of it. If to Abraham the words were addressed, "Walk in the presence of God, be ye, therefore, holy as your Heavenly Father is holy," how holy must have been Mary's life

lived in the presence of Holiness itself! It was Mary's predestined privilege to be ever speaking to Him, ever listening to Him, watching His every word and look. The mind almost recoils at the thought of this personal, constant, this tremendous contact, with whom? —with God—of the creature with the Creator —of man with the Omnipotent.

Mary's life was the reflection of her Son's; the life of that Son was Divine, the first and only perfect life that was ever lived on earth, perfect because He was God. Mary's adoration of her Divine Son was like that of St. Thomas Aquinas of our Lord in the Eucharist: "Adoro te devote, latens Deitas." If the companionship and example of a holy person be so great a grace, so powerful an influence for ordinary men (it was St. Ignatius who stirred the soul of Francis Xavier, then a student in Paris, and made him a saint), what must this grace have been in the case of Mary, to whom already had been addressed those words of the archangel: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee."

As we know, the first miracle wrought by our Lord, at the Marriage Feast of Cana, was performed through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and Catholics simply believe that miracles wrought through her intercession have never ceased. One last instance, because it is historical and of unquestioned genuineness, may be given. There may be miraculous cures of the mind as

well as of the body, and the evidence of such a cure is often the more satisfactory. "Ministering to a mind diseased" renders the cure, when there is one, all the more remarkable. In the case of Saint Francis de Sales, known later as the saintly Bishop of Geneva, there was such a cure. The difficult and dangerous question of predestination had taken entire possession of him, and he became for a time virtually a monomaniac. The ordeal he passed through was frightful; his health entirely gave way, and he became so haggard and death-like, that it became evident to those around him that the end must soon be either death or insanity. Francis de Sales, in his extremity, had recourse to the Blessed Virgin. In Paris there is and then was a well known church called the Church of Notre Dame de Deliverance, attached to the convent of the same name. Both take their name from that famous statue of our Blessed Lady before which St. Francis de Sales made his celebrated prayer when tormented with doubts about his predestination, that at all events he might have the grace to love God with all his heart in whatever might be his fate. The spirit of self-sacrifice and oblation in this wonderful prayer met its reward. The saintly youth from that hour recovered his peace of mind, which was never again disturbed in this way, and with it also perfect health of mind and body. It is singular that it was in this Convent of Notre Dame de Deliverance some two hundred years later that the holy and beautiful life of la Comtesse

Alexandrine de la Ferronays closed, and to this church, crowded with mourners from every quarter of Paris, that her coffin was removed for the Mass of Requiem.

But, it may be asked, is this influence of the Blessed Virgin over the generations a continuous one, and is it in actual operation at this very hour? Catholics say it is. Protestants say it is not—nay, further, declare that those who assert it are the victims either of delusion or superstition. Delusion if there is no such influence, superstition if they believe there is. But the Blessed Virgin herself predicted that all generations must think of her—must "call her blessed." Catholics do think of her, do call her blessed. Protestants do not. Again, is this influence of the Blessed Virgin exercised in the case of ordinary Catholics, in the case of each individual soul? Catholics believe it is. We cannot all be like St. Francis de Sales; but we have all souls to be saved. In fine, if Protestants would grasp the situation they must realise that they are in exactly the same position with regard to the Blessed Virgin as other Christians, must remember, as Wiseman pointed out, that the Blessed Virgin in giving her consent to the archangel when that consent could have been either given or withheld, and when the eternal destinies of the whole human race, then trembling in the balance, hung upon that consent, she made all mankind her debtors.

Protestants, therefore, stand in exactly the same relations to the Blessed Virgin as Catholics

do, are under exactly the same obligations to her, and owe her the same debt of gratitude. If a Protestant could only realise all a Catholic gains by this devotion, how a Catholic heart is inflamed by it and finds in it something at once sweet, sublime, consoling, so that it raises the very soul as if on wings to heaven and to God —that as we say the Magnificat we seem almost to hear that inspired song as she declares: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," seem to catch the very sound and form of that triumphant burst of adoration and of praise, of prophecy, of rejoicing and of love. Take an actual case of the working of this devotion as it really occurred. Let any Catholic recall his own experience. He will remember that on some particular morning he found himself praying with much more fervour than usual. He couldn't help wondering how it was: why his prayers were not that morning, as so often before, cold, dry, if not actually hurried over. He found himself praying as if he actually wanted to be heard; he asked God earnestly to sanctify the labours of that day and to avert its dangers. Then, reflecting again, he wondered why, apparently without any effort on his part, his prayers had been so different that morning from so many other mornings, and he suddenly recollected it was some Feast of the Blessed Virgin—her Nativity or her Immaculate Conception, the 8th of September or the 8th of December. The mystery was explained. He had forgotten the Blessed

Virgin, but she had not forgotten him—she, the "Mother of Divine Grace," as she is called in her Litany, had obtained for him the grace of prayer.

If Protestants would only allow themselves to think of the Blessed Virgin—of her life, of her at the Crucifixion, at the foot of the Cross—they would be no more insensible than Catholics are, would be no more indifferent than the Christians of Ephesus were who, fifteen hundred years ago, called upon her, saying "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." At this very moment countless hosts of those whom she predicted would call her blessed, and who pray that they may be for ever permitted to call her blessed, are under her influence, and are earnestly entreating her, as St. Bernard did, to take upon her the care of their eternal salvation, just as he did eight hundred years ago. She is gazing out through the ages, she is watching the generations which call upon her and call her blessed. We may be quite sure that she is casting longing glances on that land which was once her dowry, and if she is, England will yet get back the Faith—that England once so dear to her, the England of Bede and of Edward the Confessor, her saintly king, who predicted that a cloud, the cloud of the surrender of the Faith of their Fathers, would rest on her for three hundred years. Those three hundred years are up, the cloud is passing away—there is a strange movement over the waters.

THE END.

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